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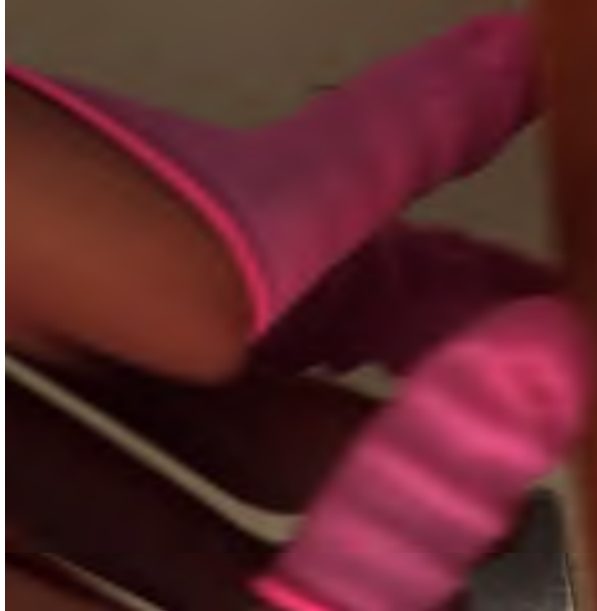
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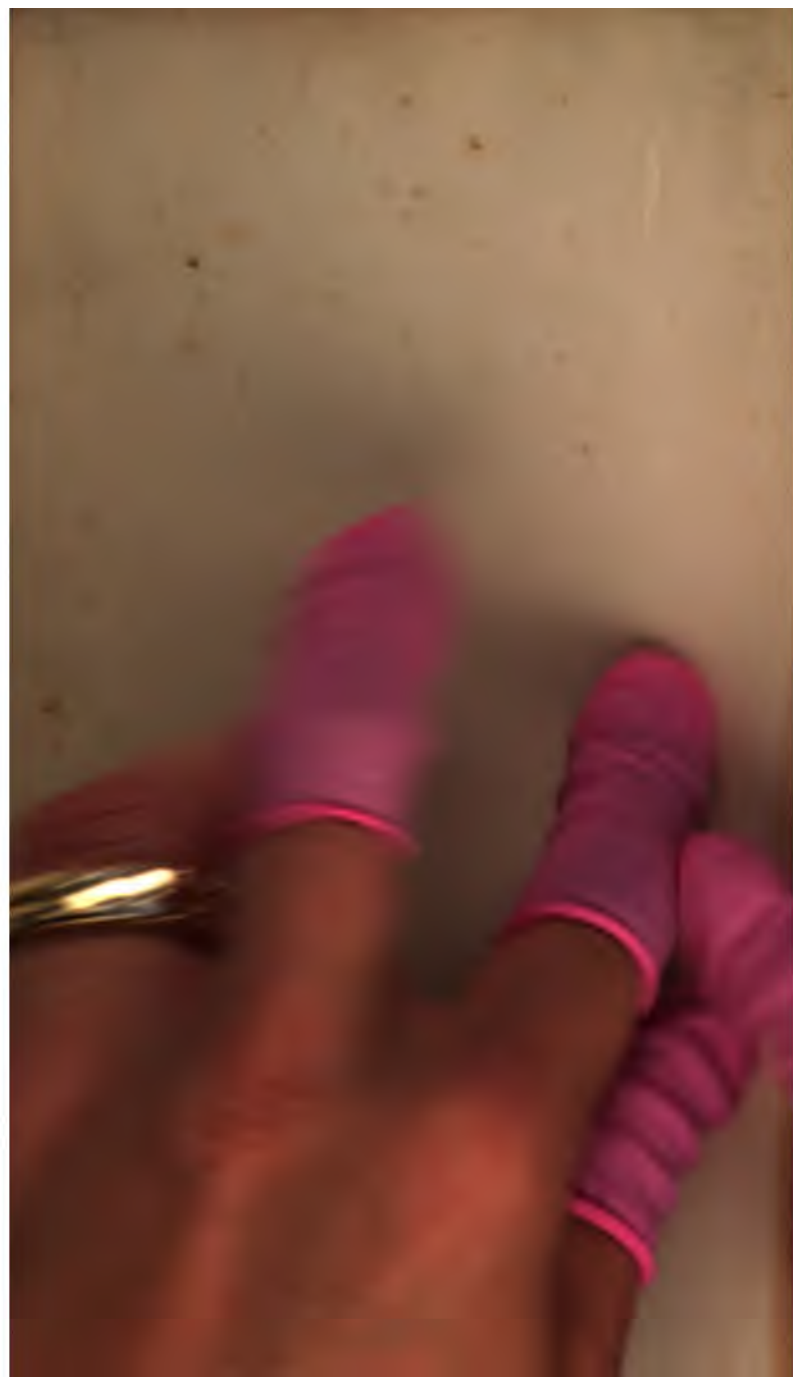






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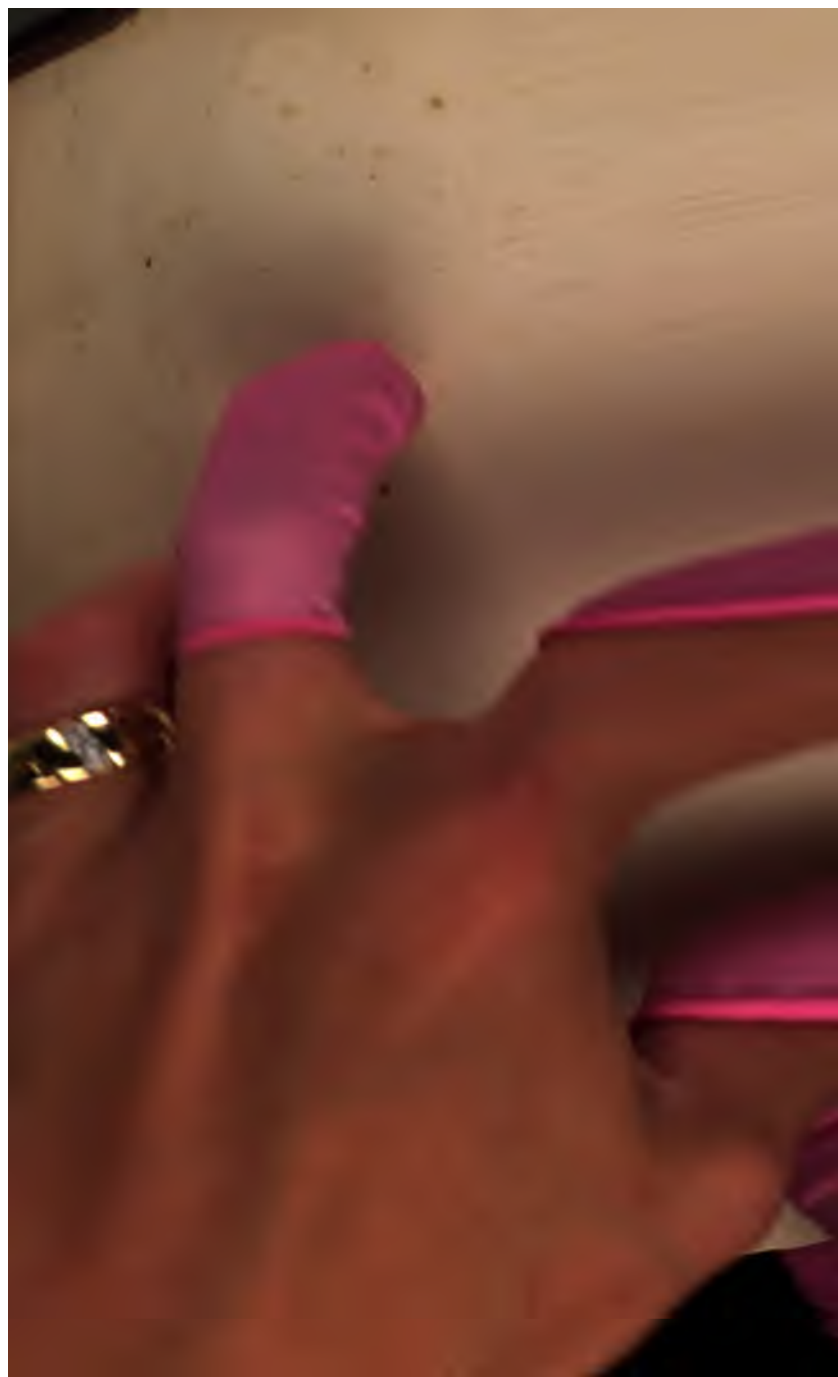






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CONFessions
OF
COUNTRY QUARTERS:

BEING
Some Passages in the Life
OF
SOMERSET CAVENDISH COBB, ESQ.

Late Captain in the 120th Foot (Camberwell Rangers.)

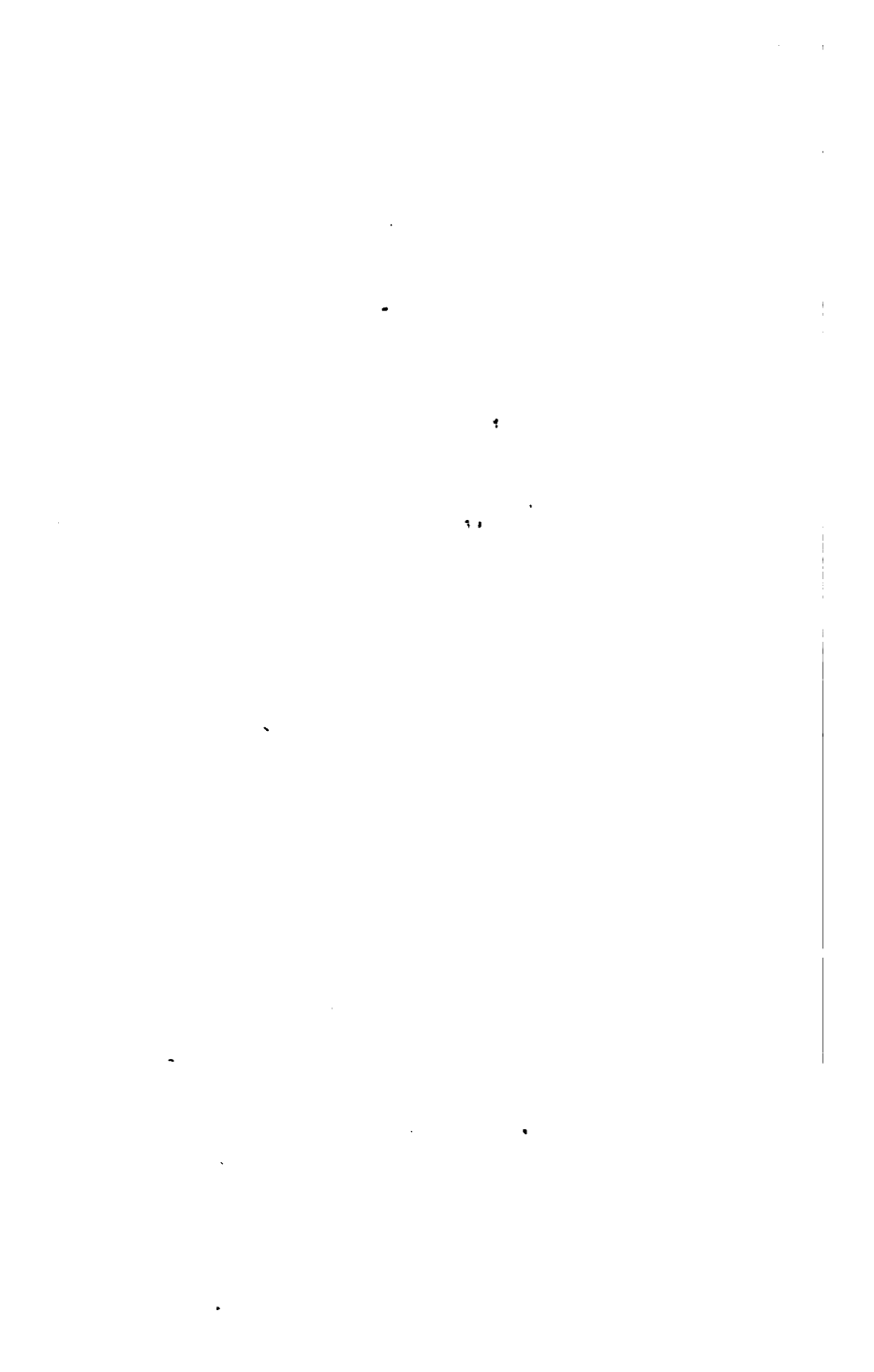
BY
CAPTAIN CHARLES KNOX,
AUTHOR OF "HARDNESS," "THE ARK AND THE DELUGE," ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

"Oh, ladies, beware of a gay young knight,
That lover, and then rides away."



LONDON
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1852.



CONFESSIONS OF COUNTRY QUARTERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SOLDIER'S FAREWELL, AFTER THE FASHION OF
THE BRITISH ARMY—LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
OF JAMES HAWKINS—CHARITABLE REQUESTS—
GARRISON HACKS AND THEIR QUALIFICATIONS—
WIDOWS OF THE 110TH FOOT—FLASH MAN OF
THE 120TH REGIMENT—BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF CONFESSOR AND HIS PARENTS—POETRY OF
MESS TABLES.

“Ballymaccrocodile, May 10, 18—.

“DEAR COBB,—I hear that you have sold
your hunters and pulled in and taken to
spooning instead, which pained me much,
as I had supposed you were eminently suc-
cessful on the Stock Exchange. I hope,
however, that the smash is not very serious;
but in your new character I wish to recom-

mend to your patronage a girl that has done me to flirt with all the time I have been here, and behaved very well, and I wish you would take her up. Ellen O'Reilly is her name; she is about twenty-two, with good teeth, and I have taught her to waltz properly, and have promised her that you shall teach her to gallop after the fashion of the court of Saxe-Weimar, on which subject, or rather about old Goethe, she is somewhat enthusiastic; her only fault being that she is a bit of a blue, and consequently talks a d—d deal of stuff about things that she don't understand; that, however, you know, most of them do without a tithe of her redeeming qualities, for she really is a very nice girl, as lady-like as could be hoped for here, and does not expect one to marry her. If you lend her that grey mare of yours, and put your smartest boy on the cab horse, you will win her heart slick away.

"The garrison hacks here are pretty smart steppers; indeed, rather better than usual; there are not dragoons enough to inoculate them with stable slang and canteen manners. One girl, daughter of an old fellow (pork and provision trade), who is as rich as a Jew, and gives dinners twice a-week, devilish near caught Willy Jackson. I think she would have booked him dearly beloved if it had not been for a host of utterly unpresentable relations that Willy could not swallow. She was not a bad style of craft either, though she ate like a cormorant and drank like a fish. She waltzes well, but is too adhesive for my taste. Beauty Bill, with that spooney manner of his, had his usual luck; he seemed so soft, that they tried a brother on him, but it did not fit; two can play at barking irons, and all that the affectionate brother got was a ball through both thighs, and within half an inch of the left femoral

artery into the bargain, devil mend him! He missed Bill altogether. So beware of the Boyds; though perhaps you may say they have had their lesson. But, seriously, you cannot do better than take up with Ellen; there are many worse ways of spending an evening than a quiet game of écarté with her. *You understand*; and though it is true that when she has too much champagne on board she is apt to be troublesome from jealousy, that will not signify to you, whose fidelity (for three months) is proverbial through the whole British army and most of the Prussian.

“Beware of a fat lump of a girl of the name of Hooper; her governor gives pretty good dinners, and the girl herself is amusing for a time, but she lies like a trooper. Ellen’s father is a clergyman, so I conclude you will speedily get to windward of him with that extensive biblical knowledge of yours, that so forcibly reminds one of the

skill in quotation attributed to the devil. There is, however, no humbug about the girl herself. She confesses that church would bore her to death, if it were not for looking out for new bonnets. She is rather out of spirits, poor thing, as might be expected, but I trust you will speedily console her. I have given her a lock of my hair, so you had better try some other souvenir when you go away. Our head quarters will get on pretty well at Cork, but I am booked for a diabolical hole called Dunmanway, further to the south-west. I do not believe it is on any of the maps. I wish you good luck among the Ballymacrocodile white muslin. Adieu.

“JAMES HAWKINS.

“P.S. Write and let me know how you like Ellen.

“N.B. The best cigars are at O’Geoghagan’s.”

Having deposited my last love affair in the hands of the first turnpike keeper as we marched out of Dublin, which is a way we have in the army, I of course began adoring Ellen O'Reilly in advance from the moment that I received the above document, or deed of transfer, vesting the property in her in me upon my arrival at Ballykillcronaghan, the village where we halted the night before we were to march into the flourishing market town of Ballymacrocodile, where, as the reader will have conjectured, the gallant 120th, of which I was then one of the greatest ornaments, was about to be quartered.

I was the flash man of the 120th, or Camberwell Rangers, a regiment too well known to need any farther description on my part; indeed, an impertinent Quaker at Norwich once went so far as to say, that we were better known than trusted in that flourishing city, but that was a drab-coloured

calumny; and as the reader is probably an ignorant civilian, and, very likely, a sensitive and inquisitive female, and the subject is an interesting one, I shall give a slight sketch of the qualities which commonly go to the composition of the flash man of a regiment, the "Mars, Bacchus, Apollo virorum," who are arrayed in scarlet and gold, as described in the Latin grammar, to encourage sucking Cæsars to aspire to that glorious distinction, an appointment the patronage of which is *not* in the Horse Guards.

Indeed, I believe, the dignitary in question commonly elects himself, and then appoints his subordinates, though I, of course, was raised to the pinnacle of 120th greatness two days after my joining the regiment, as a lieutenant, with a dog-cart and a couple of private grooms, "mighty nate young men," as Major O'Flaherty's leedy called them, on the occasion of her borrowing one of them

to drive her jaunting-car one day, when the major's batman was in the guard-house and remarkably drunk, and she wanted to drive down to the town to purchase some tea and sugar, and senna.

The flash man, then, is a something between a foreign secretary and a turkey cock; that is to say, he embodies in his own person all the pretensions of the corps, whilst he conducts much of its relations with the exterior world; goes with the colonel to call upon the mayor when they march into a town, and does the light work pertaining to that dismal formality; sits next to non-military strangers when they dine at mess, and furnishes conversation suitable to their capacities and stations in life—a duty which might possibly prove somewhat embarrassing to most of his brother officers. He generally contrives to get into society wherever they are quartered, and introduces a few of the most presentable and submissive of his fol-

lowers to the 'nicest girls,' (with the amount of whose 'tin,' as he calls it, he generally makes himself acquainted.) He dresses very well (or awfully badly if he goes for eccentric,) and rides a washy thorough-bred, price £30, with those nice thin long legs that young ladies admire so—a sort of sketch of a horse, with the neck of an ostrich, and the tail of a comet, and no body worth mentioning, that will neither race, hunt, nor draw, but will eat out of the hand and carry a lady. He rides in remarkably long stirrups, and prefers a canter to a trot. He is indignant at the idea of getting a fall, is brilliant in his gloves, flashy in his neckcloth; he pinches in his waist, and shines in his boots.

He is generally president of the mess committee, and considered a very tolerable judge of the full-bodied, high-flavoured, curious old military port, with which, when the glasses sparkle on the board, and the wine is ruby bright, the social spirit of the gayer

of the officers is wound up to that pitch of delightful hilarity which emboldens them to perpetrate waltzes, polkas, and platitudes, at a later hour in the evening. He generally sits near the colonel at dinner, and can maintain a conversation with the inspecting-general without any manifest perturbation at the presence of that grim potentate, which frightens every one into fits; he however flourishes on, reciting recent articles out of the 'United Service Journal' with great originality of manner, and laying bare the recesses of the human head as embodied in the gossip of the neighbourhood, calling the attention of the illustrious guest to the mess plate, china, glass, linen, cutlery, and livery. Perhaps the regiment, like the 14th Light Dragoons, has an article of plate that was captured in the carriage of Napoleon; or of china that belonged to the celebrated Hokypokywouskywah, who drowned himself at Tchongquoaintsiaoun to save himself from

the slaughter inflicted upon that city of dog devourers by the warriors of the West.

He ought to have a tolerable stock of miscellaneous information (though of course it need not be very great); a sufficient amount of assurance, not without that little dash of vanity that makes men work hard to please even fools; a certain tact and readiness; a Baker-street manner, and a Regent-street swagger (for it does not do for him to be *too much* of a gentleman); some proficiency in manly exercises and field sports, for the regiment carries a Miss Molly in its establishment besides, who, when dressed in the height of taste (Anglicè, fooled to the top of his bent), much resembles Madame Vestris, as she appears in command of her 'Invincibles,' and, indeed, in point of mind is an indifferent imitation of the character that commonly is enveloped in a petticoat; but nothing effeminate will do for "flash man;" he *may* be a dandy,

but he *must* be a man, and rather a smart one, for he commonly commands the light company, whose duty it may be, on active service and under circumstances of peculiar exposure, to protect the rear of the regiment from the chastisement inflicted by a too impetuous enemy that hangs obstinately on its skirts. The grenadier captain being selected either as the senior of his rank, or for appearance and stature, is a patriarchal brevet-major, or a good-humoured giant, and, in either case, embodies the thunder of the regiment, of which the "flash man" is the lightning.

Of course the reader will understand that this sketch applies merely to the general run of flash men, and by no means to the present writer. Nothing, I should hope, appertaining to Baker-street or Regent-street could, at that time at least, be detected in me, whose lady mother, the Lady Caroline Cobb, resident in Cavendish-square,

an intimate friend of the Marchioness of Mesopotamia's, and an habitual frequenter of Almack's, was deeply impressed with that great cosmical truth, "manners make the man"—a traditionary maxim which had been handed down in our family (by the mother side) from father to child since the creation (of the Earldom of Crabstock, to which noble family she belonged).

She, in my early youth, took at least as good care of my manners as of my morals, which latter branch of cultivation she considered as belonging to the domain of the church, and the catechism thereof, to which she piously left it; but she took great pains to make me a gentleman, especially by pointing out to me the various solecisms constantly in course of committal by my father, who was not so highly descended as she was, and was much exposed to contamination, in matters pertaining to his personal demeanour, from the force of daily example,

when employed in the earning of sufficient means to support us in affluence and comfort — he being engaged in extending the glory of England by mercantile adventure, in which I was fool enough, at the instance of Lady Caroline, to decline joining him, and am in consequence, or at least was recently, a houseless vagrant, earning an unpretending livelihood at a moderate rate per line and doing all my own work, a lamentable contrast to those, my brilliant and fortunate (elder) brother-authors, whose means enable them to keep what they modestly call an “amanuensis” to do their pen-and-ink work (brains thrown in).

I indeed, in those days, had no reason to complain of him; he allowed me 300*l.* a-year, which is as much as even an officer of light dragoons commonly has. With so liberal an allowance, I could not have looked him in the face if I had any debts, so I contracted none; but if I had, I have no

doubt he would have paid anything in reason, for he let me have a latch-key when I was at home on leave, stood claret all the time, had a bad cold in his head whenever Lady Caroline fancied she smelt cigars in the house, and, in short, was everything that a son could desire. But I cannot describe the advantage that it is to a man to have a lady mother. I need not describe to the reader, whose accustomed penetration will have long since taken note of the interesting fact, how fully conscious those fortunate youths are of their exalted lot. I never in my life saw one of them that was not six times more impressed with the grandeur and glory of the peerage (especially the three highest ranks, the thrones, dominations, princes) than the mere sons of the male nobility. Those connected with the order, through the better half, seem, with a touching devotion, to take after the mother, gleaming with a placid self-satisfaction that

is unruffled by any masculine roughness, and shining in society with a mild light, less fitted for the dinner-table than the tea-table, which is eminently their sphere, until some, that I have seen, become perfectly lady-like, if we may apply such an expression to a true Briton.

I know one thing, my Lady Caroline impressed me with such a respect and awe for the fair sex, that at eighteen a tremor—blissful, indeed, yet not without devotion—came over me at the very sight of white muslin; and I had attained the rank of lieutenant before I could either address young ladies, or talk of them in the correct officer-like manner. But one grows out of these things, and by two or three-and-twenty, I had acquired the proper military way of patronising garrison girls, or garrison hacks, as we called our most affectionate friends and purse-knitters in the 120th, and indeed, I believe, in every other regiment in the

service—a term of endearment more expressive perhaps than respectful, but universally recognised in the poetry of mess-tables.

Perhaps I may venture to say, at the heroic sacrifice of all character for penetration, that I never quite acquired that magical instinct into their views upon our hearts, hands, horses, homes, firesides, and domestic happiness in general which I found universal amongst the greater part of the British infantry and the whole of the cavalry; but this, I suppose, arose from my earlier experience among my own sisters not having exhibited the softer sex in the character of desperate man-hunters, or admirers of military men, of whom indeed they knew very little—hardly knowing the difference between heavy dragoons and fusiliers, poor benighted creatures; and having been accustomed to consider men's claims to position in society as consisting of a miscellaneous jumble of birth, manners, habits,

station, and clean linen—a most unintelligible hash of which is compounded what is called “a gentleman,” a thing that nobody can understand or define; whereas the red coat or blue jacket is a plain, intelligible, extra-superfine, Saxony-wool fact, within the grasp of the humblest comprehension. However, I cannot be responsible for the ignorance of these young ladies; that was my Lady Caroline’s business, and indeed it was her doing.

CHAPTER II.

COMMUNISM IN THE BRITISH ARMY — SOCIALIST
SYSTEM OF ROTATION—MILITARY READINGS—
INNOCENCE OF YOUTH—MYSTERIES OF DUBLIN—
TROTting OUT—MARCHING IN.

To return to our subject, for these are confessions of country quarters, not of Cavendish-square, though that dignified spot has its confessions to make too, which I hope to give to the public whenever Mrs. Park-lane entrusts me with notes of the unheard-of exertions she made (for the sake of her daughters) to get into society, and the frantic struggles that are made to get to *her* balls NOW. These out-pourings of an over-burdened heart relating to the market-

towns of the United Kingdom, must now return to the picturesque and exceedingly filthy borough of Ballykillcronaghan, where the left-wing of the 120th were billeted on the night of the 11th of May, 18—.

We had just finished dinner,—trout lovelier than Lady ———, and boiled-turkey with celery sauce, more charming than the strains of Jenny Lind; and after a faint attempt at introducing an apocryphal fluid they called “illigant ould port with a crust on it,” and which I therefore suppose was intended to pass for wine, by young Simpkins, who liked being genteel, which was overruled altogether, pooh-poohed, by a choral under-growl of whiskey-punch,—we had commenced moistening our military clay, which had been somewhat roughly kneaded by the day’s march and the Hibernian weather, with that liquor of life, when a disparaging remark about the accommodation afforded by Irish inns, made

by Hamilton, roused the divine wrath of O'Flaherty, a pure milesian and drinker of whiskey. "A Scotchman complaining of Ireland sounds mighty fine!" said the son of Brehons; "I'm thinking it's the pot and the kettle."

"I wouldn't own to Scotland if it was such a beggarly place as this," retorted the Scot. "A Jew cannot as much as thrive in Ireland."

"Listen to the heretic comparing the two," returned the champion of Erin. "Why, man alive, you have nothing to do but to look at their emblems, and see what they think of themselves. What are the arms of Scotland? A lion boxant. Those of Ireland, the harp; the one a brute-baste in a blackguard attitude, the other the emblem of melody and the instrument of the angels,—Hyperion to a Satyr. How can any man in his sinses, or out of them, compare the thistle to the shamrock; the one

the symbol of our blessed religion, the other an ill-conditioned weed, the food of a jackass. Fill your glass, man, and make yourself happy;" and as he added example to precept, the discussion dropped.

Almost immediately afterwards a messenger arrived with half-a-dozen letters for different officers of the detachment, containing the testamentary dispositions of the 110th, whom we were to relieve the next day at Ballymacrocodile, and of which missives a specimen, and rather a favourable one, has been given at the commencement of the last chapter; indeed it was our practice to consider the fair ones of whatever town might be so fortunate as to enjoy our protection in the light of a mild variety of harem.

It is a great convenience to the British army, that socialist system of handing the garrison beauties, accurately marked and ticketed, from regiment to regiment; one

never marches into a town without having a reversionary interest in a flirtation, and a preliminary knowledge of its object, her tastes, habits, and weaknesses, with a sketch of her prospects in case of accidents; for instances have occurred of young gentlemen, who fancied they were playing at love, finding it become very serious earnest, and ultimately hearing themselves addressed by a reverend gentlemen, who ties knots that rearely slip, as "dearly beloved."

Of course, every one of us knew perfectly well of what a tender nature these missives were, and received them with great interest, so that a dead silence ensued while we bestowed what time we could spare from the whiskey-punch, in ascertaining what prospects of delicious pain we had in store for us at Ballymaccrocodile.

My letter was perhaps the longest of all; but whether it was that Hawkins wrote and spelt well, or that I read writing with

rather more ease to myself than my brothers-in-arms, I was the first that had completed the perusal of the deed of transfer; and as I was folding it up to put it in my pocket, Popkins asked to see it.

Popkins had refused to take my duty for me the night before we left Carrickaroghery, when I wanted to drink T. T. L. tea with Anna Maria Maloney; the consequence of which refusal was a valedictory letter from the young lady, which I have no doubt had for its object the involving me in a correspondence, with the view of submitting the gushing out-pourings of my heart to the consideration of twelve freeholders of the county of Mayo, and which exercised all my ingenuity in answering it, without compromising myself, a task I effected in a very skilful and officer-like style. I do not believe any one else in the regiment could have done it half so well, though plenty of them had been trying their hands

for years at that sort of thing, and some, indeed, had burned their fingers.

Now Popkins had no business to refuse, for he had nobody to drink tea with, nobody would have him at any price; and, in truth, he was not half fast enough for the 120th, so I determined to pursue him with an inextinguishable hatred, and would not let him see the letter, at which he set up a dismal howl, complaining of my being so unsociable.

I knew that very well; I was perfectly aware that whenever any particularly delicate and confidential communication, such as one's aunt having bolted with the butler, or one's sister having been jilted by that young lord they followed down to Cowes, as well as all reproachful or affectionate love letters from the last quarter, or maternal requisitions as to purity of life, water-gruel, and dry stockings, reached any of our fellows, it was laid on the mess-table for general consideration, which practice had a

most beneficial effect upon the corps, for by giving us a lively interest in one another's affairs, it made us the band of brothers we were; but I do honestly confess that I *was* of an odd, unsociable disposition, which, together with most others of my faults and imperfections, I first tried to cure, and then to hide, and finally made up my mind to indulge.

However, Popkins was speedily consoled by Simpkins tossing him his to read, which that smart young subaltern was very anxious should be read out publicly, he being very proud of it, for it came from a dragoon, on being acquainted with whom he glorified himself hugely, who wanted to make some little change in his domestic arrangements, and who probably pitched upon Simpkins for a sacrifice, from some hazy idea, that that little man, whose father is an eminent saddler and accoutrement maker in the borough of Southwark,

would probably worship a dragoon, and do his bidding. The letter was as follows, at least so Popkins read it out, for it was clear that if one read each letter aloud, it would save the remaining nine the trouble of reading, and that plan was adopted accordingly:—

“DEAR SIMMY,—Mind you ride up and speak to me when I meet your regiment marching in to-morrow; I shall be riding with a charming creature with at least ten thousand pounds——”

“That will do for the marines,” interrupted Jenkins; “every girl has ten thousand pounds, only it isn’t payable till the day of judgment.”

“Perhaps she’s a pawnbroker’s daughter,” suggested the Major; “they have all the money in this country, where there’s more credit than capital.”

“Except what the distillers have,” said

Tomkins. "I remember when I was quartered at Newtown Mount Mulligan——"

"Yes, yes, I remember that too," interrupted I; as, I well might, seeing that I had heard the story at least two hundred times, and in every description of key, from the stentorian tone necessary to overbear the clatter of the first onslaught upon the first course down to the maudlin jingle just before Tomkins dropped off his perch, as was his habit in the small hours. "We all remember that; let's have the letter. It's no use talking about the girls till we've seen them trotted out."

This was considered a very sensible and practical remark, and the reading continued:

"I have been doing sentimental;" here Popkins paused with a puzzled expression of countenance: "I always thought sentimental was spelt with an s."

"Well, I think it is," said Tomkins, after a moment's hesitation.

"What the deuce *can* it matter?" said Jenkins. "The letters are of the same family, only the *c* is the elder brother. Go on."

"Doing sentimental for the last three months, and am dead sick of her, and am going to take up Willy Waddle's, of the 110th, flame, who, as soon as she has mopped her brinies, will suit me better; though I should think that Mary Anne O'Malley would be more in your line. She is not fast enough for me——"

"Well," said Simpkins, somewhat offended, "I do not know what makes him think I am to put up with such a slow filly." (It was the handwriting of the dragoon that inspired him with the equestrian synonym; he generally called the fair objects of his affections heifers.)

"Keep moving," said Jenkins, and Popkins continued reading:

"She is not fast enough for me; but I

am sure you will like her, for you may squeegee her hand as much as you please, and she will bear a deal of nudging. I shall take care she receives you well; indeed I have told her you have an old aunt as rich as Rothschild, who is very anxious you *should marry*, and will come down handsomely; so she will run open-mouthed at you."

A faint smile illuminated Simpkins's sallow face at this. "Haw!" said he; "slap-up fellows those dragoons are."

"Well, what next?" said Jenkins.

"So take compassion on her;— c o m-
p a s h o n," spelt Popkins.

"He must have written in a hurry," said Simpkins, "the trumpet sounding for stables;" though similar orthographical slips in an infantry man would have excited his most lively scorn.

"So take compassion on her, and say something incidentally——"('Incidentally,'

repeated he, 'that is a very good word— incidentally ; I wonder how he came by it'), "say something incidentally about your aunt and your expectations, you know, and that sort of thing.—Yours truly,

"ROBERT HOLSTER."

I missed the perusal of the remaining consignments, all of which, I have no doubt, were equally explicit and business-like, for it was time to visit the billets, and perceiving that my unfortunate ensign, Johnny Waldgrave, who was one of the most attractive boys I ever came across, but somewhat delicate, was completely knocked up by the day's march, whereas I had the endurance of an armadillo on the road, I went out to go round them, and did not return until the sederunt had broken up, after, as I learned from Johnny, very nearly getting up half a dozen quarrels about the disposal of the unconscious beauties of Ballymaccrocodile among them.

I myself lost nothing by not hearing the somewhat unceremonious overhauling undergone by the charmers in question, and, indeed, I had no interest in it. I had no intention of interfering with anyone else's game, had not the slightest idea of tolerating any poaching upon *my* preserves, and being abundantly satisfied of my ability to protect my own property, was perfectly easy in my mind upon the subject, and speedily found myself, or lost myself, in the halls of sleep, where I dreamed that Ellen O'Reilly was embroidering a waistcoat for me.

This was very pleasant, but it did not prevent the assembly sounding at the usual hour in the morning, which, to the minds of the gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease, will appear little better than the middle of the night, and I had to turn out into the cold, with the customary resolution of leaving the service immediately, which, I believe, pervades all regiments on the march

for the first half hour after starting. Of course, I was exceedingly savage, and strode along at the head of my company, for the first two miles, as if I really intended to exterminate the neighbourhood. Johnny walked silently by my side; he had taken a look at me, and seen that it was expedient not to trouble me yet a while. Johnny used to humour me about half an hour in the day, and make me do whatever he pleased the remaining twenty-three hours and a half; he looked so like his sister Edith whenever he wanted anything, that I never had the heart to refuse him; but this morning, as it happened, it did not rain; a very unusual thing in Ireland. A fine May morning has a wonderful effect in producing a tranquil state of mind, almost as much so as a bad heart and a good digestion, and Johnny, upon a second inspection of my phsiognomical barometer, perceiving that the weather had moderated, ventured to ask me whether

I knew anything about the place we were about to pass the next six months in.

I told him that I knew nothing but what was contained in Hawkins's letter, which I gave him to read, for it was too much trouble for me picking out extracts from it. I find that when one attempts to read on a road, one is always kicking one's feet against stones, or tumbling over pigs, or children, or something of the sort. Johnny was hugely taken with the idea of Ellen's only fault being a bit of a blue. He admitted that it was sometimes a fact, and always a pity, that charming women talk of things that they don't understand, but at the same time stoutly affirmed that intellect, intelligence, and feeling, must elevate and purify the female character; by which I understood Johnny to mean, must make a girl admire his verses, of which he wrote a great deal, and very well too, as I alone of the 120th can testify, as it was only to me that he ever ventured to show them.

"Those romantic ideas, Johnny, my boy," said I, "will be the ruin of you. Marriage, in the eye of the law, is a valuable consideration. A woman, in the eyes of a sensible man, is a necessary appendage to a certain sum of twenty or twenty-five thousand pounds, which you are in want of, and which cannot be had without taking her with it. You may knock off a couple of thousands for blue eyes, and a couple more for good ancles, and perhaps six or eight hundred for a good temper or an easy disposition; so that if she has a variety of good qualities you may not perhaps get more than fifteen or twenty thousand in money, taking the rest out in female perfections; while, on the other hand, if she squints or squabbles, you ought to get five-and-twenty or thirty thousand with her. That is the true practical view to take that works best in the long run, for all your personal and intellectual charms fade and decay. For, Johnny,

my boy, let me tell you there is a point in the life of an intellectual and feeling woman that is not dreamed of in your philosophy, and that is when she is forty-five, and d—d positive, and takes snuff."

"The mind being more mature," began Johnny, somewhat hesitatingly—for his conscience was tripping him up by the heels; the young rogue knew very well that, excepting his inevitable female relations, he never had spoken to a woman above five-and-twenty in his lifetime, and what was more, he was perfectly aware that I knew it too. What moral maxim he was about to hurl at my heretical head, is unhappily lost to posterity, for at this moment the head of the column approached a village, the word was passed to march at attention, and the alacrity with which Johnny drew his sword and took his place in the ranks of war savoured a good deal more of rejoicing at his escape from the

mature mind than any very burning military ardour. When we cleared this singular assemblage of man-sties, which I afterwards learned was called Carrick-a-poguenadohery, Johnny returned to my side.

"Did you hear Jenkins' riddle last night, Cobb," said he.

"No."

"When is a ship like a female thief? Do you give it up?"

"Don't bother me," said I. "What is it?"

"When she's a brig-and in stays," returned he, exultingly; "that's very good."

"It'll do for Ballymaccrocodile," replied I.

"You'll introduce me to Miss O'Reilly, won't you, Cobb?" said he.

"To be sure I will," replied I; "I'll take you to tea there. It's good for one's opinion of human nature to associate every now and then with clergymen. They don't take such a hard view of character and motives

as we men of the world do, Johnny, my boy."

"Why not?" asked Johnny, strutting, nevertheless, like a young turkey cock, at being called a man of the world; "they see sin and crime."

"They do, Johnny," said I, "but they also see sorrow and repentance. When the devil is at a premium in a man's mind, he goes to a lawyer; when the devil is at a discount in a man's mind, he goes to a parson; so I'll take you to the rectory; you'll most likely find the mother's mind more matured than the daughter's; so you shall talk to her whilst I astonish Ellen's unripe intellect."

"Who is Beauty Bill?" asked Johnny.

"Upon my word," replied I, "unless that he is a man of the name of Wiggins, who I recollect is called Bill, and si good looking, and curls his hair; I believe he sleeps with it in papers; and screws in his waist, and

takes care of his complexion, and keeps an Italian greyhound—I do not know who Hawkins means; and if it is him, I should not be able to give you any description of him, other than that he is a son of old Wiggins.”

“But you cannot defend his conduct, surely?” said the conscientious young cub; “make love to a girl, and then shoot her brother! I do not call that love.”

“How do you know that he did make love to her?” retorted I. “How do you know that she did not make love to him? How do you know what nets and snares were not wove round him by that perfidious family? Have you never heard, you heavenly innocent, of anxious mothers that hunt you for six months, and then ask you your intentions? How do you know that the father did not try to fascinate him with tawney old port, like a true Briton, the father of a family; or the mother with her

matronly arts, like a middle-aged turtle dove; or the brother with the terror of his barking-irons, like a young rattlesnake? Taking a shot at such people, is nothing but spring-guns against man-traps."

"But he might have paid her some attention," persisted that young Protestant Joseph, Johnny, "or they would not have thought about him at all; and even if they were not altogether right in what they did, to think of shooting at the brother of a girl that I was on friendly terms with, I could no more do it than I could fly. How could he ever look her in the face again, whether he hit him or not?"

"He has not the slightest intention of ever looking her in the face again, Johnny," said I; "and after this he would be a most remarkable ass if he have. Take my word for it, she won't break her shins over her feelings. What should you think yourself of a girl who would submit to having a

man pistolled into marrying her? Is that the delicacy of sentiment and the communion of souls united by the holiest tie here and hereafter?" Johnny began to wince a bit, for he recognised the language. "Is that the pearl beyond price to be sought through life, and never abandoned but in death, that you talked so much about to Clementina Mullins in Merrion-square, and that she repeated every word of, and a great deal more, to me the next night, when she believed that you were to march away that day week with the regiment, and I was to remain as aide-de-camp to his pinchbeck majesty, the Lord Lieutenant, and be worshipped by the women accordingly; as indeed I should have done, only that I found that his Excellency expected his aide-de-camps to hold his stirrup when he got off his horse, to answer the bell, and to carry *three-cornered notes*.

"What a shame," said Johnny, indig-

nantly, cut to the quick by the atrocious breach of confidence of the faithless Mullins, who had quite won his heart by telling him she would give the world to know his sister. "To think of her repeating that that I told her in the strictest confidence, after her saying——"

"What did she say?" asked I, for Johnny stopped dead short. However, his sense of honour was too high to allow of his repeating what she said, so I continued. "Don't look so savage, you young cannibal; if you want to pitch into a girl, never lose your temper, but simply accuse her of being 'missish.' It's too vague a charge for her to rebut, but it will drive her as mad as a sackful of cats. Everything that she says, answer her—now I call that missish: you'll soon have the whip-hand, and then if you don't let in a dozen or two of stingers it's your own fault. Never mind about this little matter. I told her that I would not

have you abused; and that if I ever heard of her repeating any of your sentimental tomfooleries, I'd wring her neck; so it will go no further;" and, in truth, I do not believe it did, for I have no doubt that she forgot all about Johnny and his mother and sister, kith and kin, on the arrival of an exceedingly smart hussar regiment, that relieved a very dense, heavy dragoon one, about the time that we quitted the city of the brogue.

I was sorry that I gave Johnny this little glimpse of real life, for I saw that it shook his confidence in human nature—at least, the feminine variety. He trudged on without speaking all that live-long day, looked askance at Mary Anne O'Malley, as if she were an hyæna in a claret-coloured riding-habit, when Holster trotted her out as per appointment, for Simmy's consideration; and certainly, we all thought her quite good enough for him, except Johnny,

who winked sardonically at me, made some very male, masculine, and manly remarks about field-sports, as indicating that he intended, for the future, to seek for enjoyment in those pursuits, and be no longer made a fool of by women, slouched along, as if he did not care three farthings whether any one was looking at him or not, and never as much as condescended to dust his boots as we marched into Ballymacrocodile.

CHAPTER III.

NIGHT AND MORNING! — OPEN ARMS — SINGULAR
FEMALE EQUESTRIAN TRIBE — JUDGES OF LADIES
— FAMILY ETHICS — ENTER THE STREAM — SYMP-
TOMS OF CIVILIZATION.

“LE ROI EST MORT!”

“VIVE LE ROI!”

In such terse and unmistakable language was it announced in the olden time, long ago, when there was a king in France, that another Capet slept with the ancestral St. Louis, and a fresh arm upheld the oriflamme; and even so, in that same day of May, scarcely had the fluttering hearts of the Ballymaccrocodileans ceased to throb responsively to the martial farewell of “the

girls we left behind us," wherewith, after the ancient manner, the 110th, consoled their fair friends (and their noble selves) upon their departure, ere the same hearts palpitated to the notes of hope in the "British grenadiers," by which the 120th announced that they were come to reign in their stead.

Of course everybody turned out to see us; and Johnny confessed to me privately, afterwards, when he was a little better of Clementina Mullins, that his first impression of Ballymaccrodile was, that it was the colony of a female equestrian tribe; the young rogue, notwithstanding his misogynical conversion to the sports of the field, having counted the fair ladies on horseback whom we encountered in the last five miles, and whom he found amounted to thirteen. He then ascertained the number of roads that led into the town, which being five, he therefrom deduced that sixty-five,

or thereabouts, of the damsels of that flourishing market-town kept horses, poor dear boy.

I let him find his own way out of the monstrous delusion; experience comes surely, and if one changes quarters rapidly, by no means slowly; it is much more instructive than preaching, which nobody ever attends to; and I think some considerable light had been let into his innocent mind, when about three weeks afterwards he told me that he had found out how many ladies possessed horses, or could borrow them, in the neighbourhood, and that they amounted to fourteen; adding, that probably one of them was ill the day we marched in. I doubted this last remark being his own composition, my opinion being that he had plagiarized it from Simpkins, or more likely Holster, who was an incurable, irretrievable, hopeless snob, with a gigantic opinion of himself, and a maniacal self-idolatry of his character of a cavalry officer.

Now I had no objection to bringing up Johnny myself in the way he should go, because I knew the way; but I had not the slightest idea of suffering these gents to show him the way he should not go—viz., into gentism; indeed, I had too great a regard for Edith, his sister, who was only a year older than him, and used to talk to me about his chest, which was weak, and the night air, and not letting him drink whiskey-punch—of which deleterious fluid I almost thought she believed the Bann, the Boyne, the Barron, the Blackwater, the Liffey, the Suir, and the Shannon were composed—so I considered it my duty to Edith to put a stopper upon any attempt to corrupt Johnny.

“Johnny, my boy, perhaps the fourteenth was something of a lady?” said I, as, indeed, I knew it was; for Hawkins’ horses being gone, and mine, of course, not come in, Ellen was dismounted.

"Well, that was what I thought, to tell you the truth," replied Johnny, innocently, thereby convincing me that I was correct in setting down the remark as a piracy, and from a somewhat discreditable source.

"Johnny," said I, "do you think that either Simpkins or Holster is much of a judge of a lady?"

"Well," replied Johnny, musing, with a thoughtful expression, that reminded me uncommonly of Edith when she got to the night air on his chest; "well, I do not see how either of them can ever have seen a lady; at least, I mean, ever spoken or been friends with any ladylike women. Simpkins and Co. is a very respectable firm in the saddlery line, and, I dare say, well suited to the mayor and sheriff line, but that does not make them judges of ladies, you know; and Holster's people are hemp and tallow merchants, and good judges of grease, I dare say. I do not suppose either of them knows what a lady ought to be;

I know neither knows what a gentleman ought to be."

"Then, Johnny, my boy, don't you take their opinions about ladies. If Simpkins and Holster live to be a hundred, they will not see as much of ladylike women as you have seen already," said I, thinking of Edith, and wishing I was in Eaton-square at that very moment, with Lady Elizabeth Waldgrave on one side, scolding me for not having been at church last Sunday, as was her custom, and on the other,—well, I was at Ballymacrocodile, bearing my country's arms, and respected by my colonel and brother officers, alarmingly caressed in the fashionable circles of the neighbourhood, and what more could a good soldier require; so I began giving Johnny good advice, in a species of logic at which I was unequalled.

"Johnny," said I, "when you hear such fellows as Simpkins and Holster talking

scavenger slang about tits and gals, and fillies and heifers, and a young jackass like Bubbleby wondering when he will be able to muster pluck enough to copy them, just think what sort of mothers and sisters those heroes must have had. You know it is the mother makes the boy's manners and his way of thinking about manners and habits. Well, it does not take a conjurer to tell what sort of mothers such hounds as those must have had; and, you may rely upon it, vulgar mothers make vulgar daughters."

"Precisely so," said Johnny, with the air of a Lord Chief Justice, though he knew nothing whatever about the matter, except what I pleased to tell him, and I never told him the *whole* truth, for Edith's sake.

"Well," continued I, "you know gentesses and snobesses herd together precisely as gents and snobs do, and for the same two reasons: first, that they suit one ano-

ther; and, secondly, that the thorough-bred ones won't have them at any price; so that these fine young men's sisters' friends are as bad as themselves, and they have seen nothing but vulgar women till the time that they come into the army, by which time, therefore, their snobbishness has become chronic and incurable; and though they get into better society than they ever heard of before—because, in every place there are a number of otherwise respectable people who toady the troops, still, the vulgarization is complete and ineradicable. They are gents in their youth, and club grubs in mature age."

"What do you mean by club grubs?" asked Johnny.

"The club grub, Johnny, my boy, like the *aphis vastator*, is an entomological development of the nineteenth century. He did not exist in his present form till that age, though the germ was maturing in re-

mote villages," returned I, much entertained by Johnny's puzzled aspect. "In 1815, when powder ceased to demand its food, the fire-eaters found theirs hard to get, and the half-pay heroes found that their day's subsistence would not half pay for their day's consumption at a tavern, they laid their heads together, Johnny, my boy, and then they laid the heads of King George IV. of elegant memory together, and thence arose the club of the present day, to which the club of old was but a reed ; yet can a reed discourse sweet music,—nought but a dull, a heavy sound, ever comes from a club."

"Bosh!" said Johnny.

"Be it so, Johnny, my boy," said I; "nevertheless, when the rubicund warriors beat their swords into carving-knives a new combination produced new results, and behold the club grub; the dry rot spread to the establishments of the olden time and

style, till hardly a knot in any club is now unbored by the Teredo Twaddliensis, and these fellows are in training thereanent. 'Tis education forms the common mind, Johnny," said I, "and theirs are very common minds. Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined, Johnny," said I.

"Very good—Pope," said Johnny, approvingly.

"Ask Holster or Simpkins where that couplet comes from," said I, "and I take it you'd puzzle him uncommonly. If either did make a shot he'd probably say, *Elegant Extracts*, or the *Complete Guide to Elocution*; so remember, Johnny, that swine are no judges of pearls."

"When will you introduce me to Ellen O'Reilly?" asked Johnny, who seemed somehow to connect her with pearls (he had a good deal of a quiet instinct). "She seems to me not to go out anywhere, so I cannot get introduced to her, and you promised to take me there."

"So I did, and so I will," replied I; "but you must have a little patience; and now be off with you; there's Mary Ann O'Malley has been hanging out signals for you to close this ten minutes;" the fact being that Mary Anne being a young lady who prided herself upon a strong will and decided character, had kicked at being handed over like barrack furniture to Simpkins, and the dear child of impulse that she was, had exhibited the most decided symptoms of taking kindly to Johnny instead, who returned her blandishments with a conciliatory and deprecating shyness, as if he were scratching a parrot's head.

I had good reasons, however, for not having sooner introduced Johnny into the family of the Rev. Mr. O'Reilly. That gentleman had called upon me immediately upon my arrival, evidently being moved to that overt act of attention by Hawkins, of whom he spoke as a sincere friend, whose unsettled principles on matters of belief (or anything

else, I thought) he deeply deplored, more especially the utter levity with which he associated with Roman Catholics and others our natural enemies ; at the same time expressing a fervent hope that he would speedily see the error of his ways, much of which was, in Christian charity, to be attributed to the vagabondage of a bachelor life, necessarily demoralizing.

“The Romans had a deep significance in the divinity of their Lares and Penates, Captain Cobb,” said my reverend friend, who fancied he could hoodwink *me*, good innocent man ; “the rewards of Olympus for prayers and vows were afar off ; Jupiter paid his debts at the death of his worshippers, but the Household Gods delighted in prompt payment ; it was but to offer the the vow, and the prayer was already granted, the bill presented was honoured on the spot ;” by which heathen paraphrase I understood him to signify, that heaven smiles

upon married men, which, as a beneficed clergyman, he very properly abstained from affirming in Christian language any more than its converse, that the smiles in which bachelors bask come from a very different part of the horizon.

Of course I could not tell at the moment whether it was my friend or myself that he wanted for Ellen, but concluded that the bird in the hand was worth two in the bush, (as indeed I may say without vanity was the case), and that it was I that was to beware of the bird-lime. (I was wrong about this, but that happens so seldom that I can afford to confess it when it does.) However, he asked me to dine with him in a quiet way the next Wednesday; made some inquiries about the state of morals in the regiment, which I answered with a certain promptitude of assertion I have often found serviceable when no very strict subsequent inquiries are likely to be made;

answers intelligent, I also learned the name of the bishop of the diocese, and some anecdotes about that noble earl, his brother, and other little bits of artless art.

My short interview with the worthy rector, as well as Hawkins' preference for the daughter, for he was a pretty good judge of the article, had prepared me to find something very superior in the O'Reilly family, and as I approached the rectory, appearances confirmed me in that impression.

Near the gate several small gardens appeared in front of the simple dwelling-places of the burghers of Ballymacrocodile, not small potato fields in masquerade, as is customary in that country, but real gardens, with gooseberry and currant bushes, leeks and onions, and other undeniable fruit and vegetable productions, and some attempts at creepers on the houses,

which flourished most luxuriantly, as they well might, considering the nutritive character of the walls that supported them (a rich, well tempered mud); divers puddles made practicable for infantry by boards and stepping stones, fewer panes of superannuated small clothes than usual, and other tokens of advancing civilization of which the indigenous patriots would never have dreamed if left to their own devices, and which, as I by no means attributed them to the Roman-catholic priest, I, with great sagacity, set down to the credit of the rectory, my entry into which converted speculation into certainty.

A plain, neat wooden gate, with every bar whole, led into a small court, one side of which seemed one entire mass of roses. Everywhere else, flowers and shrubs, well chosen and well kept, filled the space between the neatly gravelled centre and

the wall, sensibly covered with fruit trees; and finally, the door was opened by a very clean, smiling, plump, trim maid servant.

This last circumstance convinced me that I was in a Christian home. Any one of the lesser nobility of the neighbourhood, of aboriginal descent and ideas, would have had his hospitable portal graced and dignified by a shock-headed cowboy disguised in plush, or an incarnated blast from the stables, sooner than suffer his Druidical dignity to be compromised by admitting that he could be served by Kitty, who was pretty enough to have been the pride of Coleraine if her lot had been cast in the province of Ulster.

She, with her cheery smile, and the evidence of good sense on the part of my host that her appearance afforded, pleased me so much, that I asked her in an off-handed military manner if her mother had any more of her, which warlike pleasantry

made her my friend from that moment forwards, and she marshalled me into the drawing-room without the formality of asking my name, which, indeed, she did not require, as she simply announced me as "The Captain, ma'am."

CHAPTER IV.

ENTER THE STREAM—FIRST PLUNGE—SYMPTOMS OF
WILLOWS—TRIAL OF SKILL—BENEVOLENCE OF
THE CONFESSOR—ANGLING FOR TROUT—CATCH-
ING A PIKE.

ELLEN O'REILLY was sitting in the window when I entered, and was performing some extraordinary feat of embroidery, which convinced me that my vision of the waist-coat was coming true. (Alas! it never did.) She rose, and I thought at the moment that for two or three minutes she tried to keep between me and the light (when I found out *why* she did so, as I did soon afterwards, I could have cried for the poor

girl, if crying had been conduct becoming an officer and a gentleman), and I thought she seemed somewhat agitated, which I naturally set down to the splendour of my appearance, or that *tremblement de femme* which I presume commonly accompanies the transfer from the old love to the new, a species of vibration natural to a state of transition, at least in a young girl; it wears out in due time.

Mrs. O'Reilly, whom I at once perceived was an Englishwoman, received me very cordially; but being almost immediately afterwards called out of the room upon some affair of domestic economy—of which the only word that reached me was “capers”—left me at liberty to open a communication with Ellen, which, acting on the word I heard, I effected forthwith by telling her that I was exceedingly fond of boiled mutton; and the start of surprise she gave at my foreknowledge of the dinner, as well

as her curiosity as to how I acquired it, placed us on a confidential footing directly.

Ellen certainly did Hawkins' taste great credit. She was tall; her figure, though slight, was rounded, and in her dark blue eye I thought I could discover more feeling than his description had given me to expect; and long before that evening was over, a sort of lurking suspicion began to worm itself into my mind, that my friend James the lady killer had been indulging in a trifle of libel upon a girl to whom he was behaving very badly,—not that that was any business of mine, hawks do not pick out hawk's eyes—I did not altogether like throwing the first stone, but I read his letter twice over that night before I went to bed, and weighed and considered it, text and context.

She might be called a blue at the mess of the 110th, on the principle of the proverb, "*Parmi les aveugles le borgne est*

roi;" but her conversation, though intelligent, was simple, unstilted, and immaculate of fine or foreign expressions.

She talked a good deal upon a great many subjects connected with literature, but she certainly understood them, for she always read the books themselves, and never the reviews, and was perfectly free of the superficiality of magazine twaddle; in short, without pretension, affectation, or display, it was hard upon her to apply the title of blue to her.

There was no cant, still less polemical bitterness about her; and I dare say she was a very good judge of a new bonnet: but if the tree be known by its fruit, Ellen certainly went to church for something better than new bonnets. Charity, humility, kindness, gratitude, or forgiveness, each alike ready to repay good for evil, all these things speak a language that is very low, but very unmistakeable. I never heard her

say an unkind word of any one, though I have seen her tried pretty severely. I never observed in her the slightest disposition to flirt; and, indeed, I thought her then, and think her still, a very amiable and superior young lady.

However, the present subject was a dish of delicious trout, which preceded the fore-shadowed boiled mutton, which was excellent, and did not eat the worse for being handed round by Kitty. Indeed, it was a very agreeable dinner altogether, and, I thought, a colossal improvement on those ponderous conglomerates of masters and mistresses, with one lord for dignity and one young lady for grace, on which one occasionally does treadmill (of course, good reader, never at *your* hospitable board); here we had a great deal of very interesting and—notwithstanding it was at Bally-macrocodile rectory — polished conversation; for the Celt, when he *will* take a polish, takes it kindly.

It is the Celtic blood in the French that makes French conversation so brilliant, and the language so spicily idiomatic. No one supposes that the mantle of wit descended on the Gauls from Chlodowick or Childeric, or any other of the unpronounceable Frankish anthropophagi that made the third century hideous; it came from the Gaelic Brennus, whose flinging his sword into the scale was nothing but a practical witticism, the steel and the sneer pre-eminently Celtic, as O'Flaherty of ours told me, though I did not think the transaction so praiseworthy as he did; but I suppose *that* was the Celtic blood in him. Saxon I thought the organ of acquisitiveness too much developed in it; that of conscientiousness too little influential.

Of course I took a leading part in this conversation, but am deterred from giving it to the public, partly by native modesty, and partly because it so nearly resembled

the conversation that any well-bred civilian may encounter any day at any well-selected party, and wanting, the true military twang, does not come strictly under the category of Confessions of Country Quarters, and partly because no part of it bore very directly upon the future history of any of the parties concerned. When it was on the lighter topics of interest of the day, Ellen bore her part meekly; and when we talked about poor-laws, and tithes, and the value of labour and land, Ellen did not join the conversation. But my vigilance, generally tolerably wide awake, had been stirred up to the highest pitch of watchfulness by Mr. O'Reilly's ready and active attention to me—which tapped rather stingingly at my conscience, for I felt I did not deserve it—by a certain confidential manner in Mrs. O'Reilly (which would have afforded a great deal of amusement to the mess, if bestowed upon most of the other of our

fellows), by an occasional glance from Kitty, which that active young lady, whenever I caught her eye, shifted to the potatoes or the roly-poly pudding with a rapidity that showed that she had some particular reason for eying me, and for not being taken in the fact; and finally, by Ellen's own proceedings, who, I soon perceived, having recovered from her first flurry, was holding me at arms' length to look through me. Not that there was anything to complain of in her reception of me, or in her manner to me; nothing could be more kindly or more cordial than her welcome; but I could plainly perceive that it was not so upon *my* account alone.

When Ellen O'Reilly, to whom I shall always be a true and sincere friend, fancied that she could in actual fact and bona fide earnest hold *me* at arms' length and look through me, she undertook a task that would have baffled Talleyrand. She was a

simple-minded honest girl, a bright-eyed impersonation of home, trained by a home-education for the duties, the pursuits, and the pleasures of home, with about as much chance of taking *my* measure as of ascertaining the distance of Sirius or the future of France.

She had none of that delightful assurance and confidence in her own opinion, her own discernment, and her own astuteness, that used to charm me so much in young O'Leary's girl, Caroline de Courci, who, having had the advantages of a boarding-school education, at Mrs. Flanagan's establishment for young ladies, at Cork, and having seen a good deal of the world in her walks with the rest of the pupils (of whom she probably was one of the smartest) in the Blackrock-road, fancied she was an overmatch for the whole universe united, upon any subject whatever, from cross-stitch to conic sections, taking Shakspeare by the

way. She had a good deal of talent and perseverance, and very nearly made O'Leary marry her. Jenkins had an amazing quantity of difficulty in persuading him to administer the usual sedative to her, in the shape of an inexorable father, or an impracticable grandmother, or capricious aunt. I forget which he employed on this occasion; but I suppose the one is as good as the other.

Ellen, however, in such a passage of arms as this with me was hopelessly over-matched; all that *her* little plans of artless art did was to show her own hand without getting the slightest peep at mine; and perhaps it was fortunate for her that she did. The weather was fine, and I was in good health and spirits, and inclined to be good-natured. I did not want her for myself; and getting sometimes tired of carrying on these garrison flirtations on my own account, was not disinclined to

the variety of carrying on one on the account of somebody else.

It would be a novel excitement, at all events, and I offered no opposition to the project I saw she had formed from the first—viz., of making me a go-between between herself and Hawkins, the more so, as I was certain that gentleman would tolerate nothing of the sort, being probably deeply engaged in some fresh affair of the same nature—at least, if the semi-barbarous village he occupied afforded anything that habitually wore shoes and stockings.

Such, at the time, was really my view of the case, founded upon the experience of several years' service of my country in different parts of the United Kingdom; and by all rules of reading the future from the past, it *ought* to have been a correct one; but recent events have shown us in a grim and portentous panorama, that even the most astute kings, ministers, newspaper

editors, and free-traders cannot always spell the coming aright. I do not arrogate to myself the gift of prophecy, and though an officer, am but a man.

Upon calling the next day, I found that Mr. O'Reilly was out visiting his parishioners, of whom he had not quite so many as could be desired, though, to those he had he was a real link between heaven and earth, and to the Roman Catholics of the district he was a sort of perambulatory savings bank; for the same want of faith that prevented those good people trusting their souls to the rector, also prevented their trusting their money to the priest; and all the remittances from America, and such like transactions of exchange, fell upon the shoulders of the Protestant ecclesiastic. Mrs. O'Reilly held mysterious confabulation with the house-keeper; so, finding no one in the drawing-room when I entered, and seeing Ellen in the garden, tying up some flowers, I walked

out through the window which opened on it, and joined her. I then became aware that she had a younger sister of fifteen and another of five. I certainly thought her remarkably pretty when she came forward, her countenance beaming, and her hand stretched out to welcome me; yet her manner was not without embarrassment either.

“I am afraid you will find this a dull quarter, unless you are a fisherman, Captain Cobb,” said she; “Lord Mountararat is very shy of his shooting—(shy, in Anglo-Irish, means stingy)—and the Carrick-a-Gullion hunt is stopped; the people used to pelt them with two-year-olds.”

“Not a bad reason for discontinuing the hunt,” said I, laughing, for I was aware that a two-year-old is not, as an ignorant Saxon might suppose, a zoological term, but a geological one, signifying, in fact, a stone about the size of an orange, one of twice

that size being a four-year-old, and both very inconvenient if liberally applied to the person. I felt convinced, however, that Ellen would not have used a term so nearly approaching slang, had she not learned it from the 110th, as well as learn to use it without scruple. I determined to cure her of that; indeed, I generally did a good deal towards making every girl I took in hand presentable.

"You will find very good fishing," said she. "Papa fishes sometimes; he says that hunting and shooting are not clerical, but the parish need not grudge the rector a dish of trout every now and then. He caught those we had yesterday."

"No doubt it is a purely orthodox, and, indeed, apostolical occupation," replied I; "and, if I recollect right, strongly commended in the proverbs of Solomon, in which there is not a word about double-barrelled guns; and, no doubt, fish have been

peculiarly the property of the Church in all ages. The john-dory is the especial property of St. Peter. It is only a corruption from the Italian, 'il Janitore' being said to be the fish from whose mouth the saint that sits at the gate of Heaven took the tribute-money."

"Have you heard from Captain Hawkins lately?" asked she, somewhat shyly.

My heart smote me as I answered, "He wrote to inform me that I was to have the pleasure of your acquaintance, which, I trust, will soon ripen into a lasting friendship." I had learned this form of speech, since my arrival, from Holster, who called it "feeling a filly's mouth."

"But I suppose you write to him sometimes?" continued she, totally overlooking the lasting friendship; perhaps she had heard that before, and could estimate the duration and intensity. "He told me you were the dearest friend he had."

"I do not know that men ever correspond much," replied I, "but I shall write to him in a few days."

"Oh," said she, and then checked herself suddenly, "we saw a great deal of him when he was here. (She pricked her finger with a thorn at this moment.) We were all so sorry when the 110th went away. It is one of the provoking things about you officers, that you come to a place, and by the time we begin to know you and like you, you are ordered away."

It is the mercy of Providence, thought I; the last route was the salvation of at least seven of our fellows, who never could have backed out otherwise.

"And then," continued the poor girl, "it leaves such a blank."

I was astounded at the assurance with which she said this to me, who was come to Ballymacrocodile rectory, that blessed day in May, for the express purpose of filling



Handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is arranged in several paragraphs, with some lines being more legible than others due to the quality of the scan. The handwriting appears to be in a cursive or semi-cursive style.

her blank; "but," she continued with a quiet earnestness, "it is hard when one has become accustomed to people, and received much kindness and attention from them, and learned their ways, and how to please them, and found subjects in common, and felt that they like one, and, in short, made friends of them, to have to part, and with so little chance of seeing them again. You have no idea how one misses them."

These remarks, quiet and subdued as was the manner in which they were made, were accompanied by a gentle sigh or two, that smote me a good deal harder than I liked to admit to myself.

"It is nothing to you," she continued; "you go on to fresh scenes, and make fresh friends, and have your occupations and your amusements to keep you from thinking; but it is those that are left behind who——"

At this moment we were interrupted by

little Alice, who came, bounding like a young gazelle, to summon us to luncheon, and having secured one of my hands, led me, like a tiny princess with a captive giant, into the presence of her mamma, who speedily commenced an attempt to fatten me on cold corned beef—a most savoury method of preparing the flesh of oxen, as practised in the Emerald Isle, but as yet but imperfectly revealed to the Saxon.

My little princess now engaged her captive giant in conversation, and the pretty behaviour—sprightly yet unobtrusive—of the child, together with her evident intelligence and the careful cultivation that had obviously been bestowed upon her, and, indeed, her sister Nanny, a large portion of which I set down to Ellen's account, prepossessed me more and more in favour of the O'Reilly family. It also gave me a somewhat uncomfortable sensation at the idea that mischief might have been done

here by a friend of mine. I thought a great deal upon the subject as I returned home, and when I reached the barracks, found a rumour there prevailing that we were immediately to be ordered to Brighton. I did not believe it; it struck me as being too good news to be true.

CHAPTER V.

REGIMENTAL STATE—HERO OF WATERLOO—HOW WE
LOVE IN THE ARMY—AWFUL APPEARANCE OF
LORD GEORGE—STABLE MINDS—BREATHLESS
ESCAPE OF THE CONFESSOR.

THAT the reader may have a clear idea of who were that band of bold adventurers—of red-coated Columbuses—who were now busy exploring the barbarous wilds of Bally-macrocodile society, I shall present him with a nominal return of the garrison of that disloyal city, on the 22nd of May, 18—:

Major O'Flaherty, commanding in the room of Colonel Howard, C.B., absent on leave.

Captains—Jenkins (Grenadier).

Cobb (Light Infantry).

Popkins.

Lieutenants.... Tomkins.

Simpkins.

Musgrave.

O'Leary.

Ensigns Macdougall.

Hamilton Stuart.

Boyd,

and my boy Johnny, whom his mother, by an atrocious abuse of aristocratic connexion, had persuaded the Colonel to put into the light company, that he might have the benefit of my fatherly care—a piece of injustice which O'Leary, who would have given his eyes to the wings and cord-sash, never forgave, till O'Flaherty by—by a regular Irish job—got him into the Grenadiers. My other subaltern, Ravenswood, was absent on leave.

O'Flaherty was a shock-headed semi-savage, from Jar Connaught, a good soldier and story-teller, and by no means ferocious, though his ancestors, who were kings in

Connemara, or Great Moguls, for anything that I know, in the days of Ollambdh Fodlahmb, bore that title, and by no means meekly. He was a sportsman too, and had a brace of setters, which, on the ground that the name of a sporting dog should always consist of one syllable, he had christened Port and Clart. Jenkins was a Welshman and a wag, and Popkins an adjective; Musgrave a north-countryman and a gentleman. The rest were promising young officers.

The barrack accommodation being limited, the squadron of the 20th heavy dragoons messed with us, giving us thereby a most interesting insight into the character and habits of some parts of the cavalry variety of the British army. I am bound to say that the 20th was a very indifferent sample, and that my experience of other regiments completely upset any conclusions I might have arrived at from our knowledge of

them. These booted Apollos were commanded by Major Ducrow, (who, as he informed us, before we had time to march our companies off to their quarters when we arrived, was styled in his regiment the Hero of Waterloo, for reasons that will become apparent in due time and place,) Captain Waddilove, Lieutenant Holster (who considered Don Juan as merely a faint foreshadowing of the "coming man" himself), and Kilderbee (who had two ideas—one was Cavalry fellows, the other, Limmers,) and, I suppose, they ought to have had some cornets with them, but I believe the sucking Murats were learning to ride at Cahir, a process which always seemed, to me at least, when hounds were running, to partake much more of unlearning than anything else.

In the garrison there was an engineer and two artillery officers, who did not mix much with us, who were mere food for the powder

they manufactured. They resided in great ease and dignity in a palace which the ordnance department (which they represented) had erected adjacent to the man store-rooms in which we were stowed away, and which comfortable family mansion of theirs, indeed, to the eye of a stranger, would have seemed an integral part of the barracks of Ballymacrocodile; from which, however, notwithstanding a certain general external resemblance, to save appearances, and the being surrounded by the same wall, it differed very widely indeed, in point of interior accommodation, salubrity, and comfort. They, as the phrase runs, "kept themselves to themselves," and, I believe, had a tea mess.

They held us, in general, in utter scorn and contempt, as men without mind, intellect, or mathematics, who did not know a parabola from a spheroid, and could not calculate nativities as I believe they

thought they could, so high was their opinion of Woolwich science; but I am bound to say, and I do so with all due humility, that they professed great esteem for me nevertheless, having discovered that I knew something about the component parts of triangles, upon one of them making a remark to Major Ducrow (I do not know upon what provocation) about the square of the hypotenuse, which that gallant officer supposed to signify some irregular variety of Russian infantry, and said he would like to try if he could not break it with lancers, and was about to add an illustration from Waterloo, as usual, when I explained the meaning of the term to him; whereupon he thanked God he was not what he was pleased to call a "gometor," and knew nothing about those sort of things, and, indeed, in that way he had a great deal for which to be grateful to Providence.

I may add, that our scientific fellow-soldiers had another establishment in the barracks—the canteen—an institution indicative of great sagacity on the part of the authorities who sanction the investment of public money in buildings from which the Ordnance derive a handsome rent by keeping the Army drunk.

These, then, were the conquering heroes that reigned over the Ballymacrocodilinas in May, though of course, as the year advanced some departed and others came in their stead, till that dread day arrived, when in the grey of the morning the whole pageant melted away in strains of soft music dying away in the distance, like the delusion that it was, from the tearful eyes of “the girls we left behind us.”

Johnny was a great observer of Ducrow and Holster, and used to take huge delight in setting them off in their peculiar lines,

which was by no means difficult, meat, clothes, and fire not being more necessities of life to those gentlemen than an audience, which they could not always command, for they treated Tomkins, and Simpkins, and O'Leary (off whose mess-plate they were dining) with an assumption of superiority, based upon their being "cavalry men," which those mild subalterns occasionally revolted against. Johnny, however, young as he was, laughed them to scorn.

He amused me exceedingly, the first night he came actually in contact with the ordinary working-day dragoon, and became aware of the singular habits and practices of these horse warriors, the strange ideas that are current among them, and the wonderful delusions they labour under about their own importance, about women in general, about good eating and good taste, about dress and address, and the customs of society and the ways of the world,—in short, about life.

His experience had been confined hitherto to a slight acquaintance with some of Lady Elizabeth's young friends in the Life-guards and Blues, who used to patronize him for Edith's sake—whom I believe, in his secret heart he regarded with becoming awe, and, I have no doubt, with great inward envy, though he was too good a son to reproach his mother with not parting with a quarter of her income to keep him in a cuirass. Ducrow, however, upset all his preconceived notions of the dignity of the "long sword, saddle, bridle"; and he used to sit opposite that wearisome warrior at mess, and make him repeat, time after time, the whole story of how Lieutenant Ducrow and the 20th heavy dragoons comported themselves on the three days (the regulation allowance for a crisis in the nineteenth century) of 1815, from the time that the French crossed the Sambre, to the time that the 20th performed the same feat in pursuit of them,

from which it would appear that the said Lieutenant Ducrow, from 6 A.M. on the 15th of June to 6 P.M. on the 20th, was present the whole time in every place, from Brussels to Charleroi, and from Wavre to Hal, notwithstanding that he was desperately wounded and left for dead on the 16th; made prisoner, and escaped miraculously on the 17th; and half cracked by a round-shot on the 18th,—all which wonderful accounts Johnny used to write off to Edith, who used to be very grateful to me for making him such a good correspondent; and, in truth, she was in some degree indebted to me for the amusing part of these letters, for it was I who first sufficiently impressed upon his young mind the necessity of learning to keep his countenance.

“I say, Holster!” said Johnny, one evening that we were sitting at mess, and had got tired of Ducrow and the 7th French

cuirassiers, he had hewed into small bits, "who was that black-haired girl you were riding with to-day? You seem pretty thick there—eh, old fellow!"

Holster replied with a wink, to attract my attention; to which Johnny gave me a kick on the shin, that almost set me off howling.

"You cavalry fellows should not keep all the girls to yourselves; you ought to let us have those you don't want!"

"It is no fault of ours!" replied the worthy scion of hemp and tallow; "it is not that we want all the girls,—it is that they all want us!"

"That's very true!" remarked Waddilove; "it is a great bo-ar; they have no mercy on us,—indeed, here they are peculiarly voracious; I met a girl at O'Hara's, the other day, I thought would have eat me up,—she let me have no peace."

"I sat opposite to them," whispered

Johnny to me; "he said something stupid to her three times, and she snubbed him every time, and I believe would have made an awful example of him, only her mamma was watching her like a black velvet dragon, and looking as black as thunder at her all the time. The girl thought him an ass, but I believe the mother would have worshipped a blue-faced baboon, providing he came in the shape of what she called a 'horse officer.'"

"I have seen something of the sort myself in my time, Johnny," replied I; "but keep Holster on the trot."

"She seemed tolerably sweet upon you, Holster," continued that young gentleman; "has she any brothers?"

"She has some confounded cousins," replied Holster; "I don't much mind brothers, they don't generally want to be bothered with their sisters when they are in company, and besides, if they get into my way

I kick them out of it; but those confounded Irish cousins are troublesome fellows that won't take a hint."

"You should tell her that she must send them away when you are with her," said Waddilove; "threaten to throw her over, and she'll soon grow docile; that I find always brings them to their bearings."

"Don't they ever take one at one's word?" asked Johnny, with an engaging meekness; he would keep on kicking my shins all the time.

"By Jove! I should like to see one of them try such a trick on me," replied Holster, magnificently, with a tremendous tug at his moustaches. "No, no, my boy, you're not up to things yet; the true danger of such a threat is that it may bring on a scene; it's when they get repentant and confiding and pathetic, that you must look out for squalls; at least, that's what we have to fear in the cavalry," continued that

fashionable officer, correcting himself, for he evidently felt painfully that he had lowered himself, by supposing that the same rules could apply to "the worm-crushers," as I once heard him inadvertently call us to Ducrow, when they were both rather more than usually fuddled with *our* port; "I don't know how it may be in the marching regiments, but *we* find it very embarrassing, upon my honour."

"Yes, we poor padnaggers have no chance against you," said Johnny; "but you have not told us about that young lady you were riding with."

"I was not riding with her, Waldgrave," replied the dragoon, "she was riding with me; and it was as much as I could do to get rid of her at the barrack gate. It was quite painful to have to send her about her business, she looked so disappointed; but that was no fault of mine, I *must* dress well, and if it is too killing, it is that sort of killing that is no murder."

"Did she admire your dress?" asked Johnny; "was it the coat or the boots?"

"It was the man, I should think," said Holster; "she said something about a jewel having a fitting casket, and I'm sure my clothes fit well enough."

"Did she call you her jewel?" returned Johnny, somewhat surprised; "why an old beggar-woman called me her jewel the other day."

"She said as much," answered the other; "they all do. Waddilove, what will you take about Lord George's colt for the Leger?"

Upon this awful question being asked, I instantly made my escape, followed by Johnny and two or three others, who were as painfully aware as I was that anything like rational conversation, or any description of amusement, was over for that evening, from the moment that the introduction of the subject of racing placed the dragoons in the saddle. Merciful powers! how they

used to talk about races and horses, and, ye gods! how ignorantly.

At all times and places, in season and out of season, we were nauseated by the everlasting outpourings of the stable mind and the idiotic deductions of stable logic. Blunderbuss was to beat Carronnade at York because Firelock beat Pocket Pistol at Newmarket, because Blunderbuss was great uncle to Double Barrell, and Howitzer was grandmother of Grapeshot; Cocksparrow was to give Cassowary three pound at Exeter because Turkeycock carried a feather weight when Waterwagtail beat him at Doncaster. One would suppose that the words Liverpool, York, Manchester, and Exeter, signified merely some suitable space for bringing horses and cups together, and that the English language was invented for the sole purpose of enabling the "Era," and "Bell's Life," to enlighten the British public about sweepstakes, and stallions, and

Holloway's pills. I wish the Pope had come to dine at mess sometimes, he would have learned that there was a calendar worth a dozen of his. Then they would get among their troop horses, and we were deluged with spavins and glanders, and windgalls and speedy-cut. A 35 was a long-tailed crib-biter, and C 14 a ring-tailed roarer. We had hard mouths and sore eyes and cracked feet all dinner time, and had staggers and hide bound and speedy-cut after. Never was such might, majesty, and dominion, given to the species *Equus*, and indeed, the fear of it, and the dread of it, was so strong upon me, that upon its introduction, whenever practicable, "I saved myself," as the French most expressively say.

Oh, gentle reader, when your hospitable board is at last graced by a brace of the principal luminaries of that brilliant cavalry regiment you are so anxious to toady,

if you regard your other guests, place them as far as possible asunder, and allow them on no pretence to communicate with one another. If you do, you will never get the conversation into a Christian channel again—it will be all horses and races, races and horses.

It was a fine evening, early in June, and I judged that the best thing I could do was to stroll down to the rectory, where I had, of course, by this time, made myself at home. I had already intimated to Mrs. O'Reilly that I wished to introduce a young friend of mine, and one whom I was sure she would like, &c. &c. &c.; and having received a gracious assent from that lady, now informed Johnny that I would fulfil my promise to him, and take him to tea there that very evening, with which notification he was highly delighted, and scampered off to his quarters to dress himself. Alas for the days that one scampered off to one's

quarters, and one's heart bounded at dressing for tea!

I had not told Johnny why I had delayed presenting him to the O'Reilly family so long, though he had more than once loudly expressed his surprise at it, being accustomed to see my promises, whether for good or evil, very rapidly followed by performances. The fact was, that I found Ellen's affair was much more serious than commonly was the case with matters of the sort. What had passed between her and Hawkins I had no means of knowing; she, of course, did not confide in me; and though a sort of tacit understanding was springing up between me and her mother, still it had not yet amounted to an interchange of confidence sufficient to confirm my surmises, though it certainly strengthened them. I was quite satisfied that Hawkins had won her heart,—was by no means clear as to what had passed between them about her hand, and

being utterly powerless to control events contented myself with awaiting them.

However, as Ellen was in confirmed low spirits, and utterly unable to conceal that something was preying upon her heart, I did not choose to subject her to the annoyance of making any fresh acquaintance, still less to draw upon her, in her then state of mind, the observations of our humorous young officers, who would speedily have ferreted out the story somehow; agreed among themselves that she had the pip; asked me if she was always shedding shiners; and christened her by some facetious nickname, significant of her forlorn and deserted condition.

As she did not at that time enter much into the gaieties of the place, I had no difficulty in effecting this temporary seclusion; and in time, though she did not absolutely recover her spirits, she at least got her feelings under control, and then I judged that I might safely comply with Johnny's

wishes to make her acquaintance, the more so as that young gentleman had an old-fashioned habit of never repeating what he heard or saw in places where he was intimate.

Indeed, I knew very well that none of our people were so well qualified to be admitted into the bosom of a respectable family as my young subaltern; and after informing him that at Mr. O'Reilly's there were family prayers every night, and inquiring whether he knew how to behave himself at them,—to which he answered, with some affectation of indignation, in the affirmative,—my mind was perfectly at ease as to the impression he was likely to make. I was right enough; but there were prayers that night of a nature that I never calculated on.

CHAPTER VI.

SHADOW ON THE STREAM—STARTLING CONFIDENCE
—SOMETHING PARTICULAR IN THE WIND—UN-
PLEASANT DISCOVERY OF A CONSCIENCE—THE
FROGS AND THE BOYS THAT FELT THEM—RE-
FRESHING CLOSE OF THE DAY'S WORK.

JOHNNY was received, as I had anticipated, by the O'Reilly family, with a kindly friendliness, that set everybody at their ease; and then I was introduced to a gentleman whom I had not before met,—the Rev. Henry Beecher,—who, it turned out, was the curate of the adjoining parish, a pleasing, gentleman-like young man of highly clerical appearance, somewhat formal, perhaps, yet not more so than was consistent with his

profession, who returned our salutations with an air—benevolent, yet somewhat alarmed—that gave me the impression that he looked upon us men of war as two baptized tigers, or man-devils, whose souls (if they were still in the betting) he nevertheless would have cheerfully prayed out of purgatory without fee or reward, which is more than his Roman-catholic anti-type would have done; though during the evening he spoke of the priest in terms of respect that I doubt that functionary deserving, seeming to regard, or rather to endeavour to regard, the Reverend Dionisius O'Shaughnessy as a labourer in the same vineyard, only with different tools.

Indeed, I believe poor Beecher, though, of course, “a blood-stained and Celt-hating Saxon, and a bigotted member of an alien and bloated establishment that battered on the vitals of the people, and turned the green fields of Erin into a howling wilder-

ness," as the pious Dionisius used to say, Beecher, I have good cause to believe, never indulged in a malignant feeling against any created being, and never wilfully put his foot upon a worm.

I soon perceived, that he was evidently, and deservedly, a great favourite with Ellen, and that, for what reason I could not tell, there was a remarkable harmony and accord in their views of the various topics that offered themselves during the evening (except one); but still, with all that, I remarked that though she looked earnestly and kindly, if not compassionately, at him when he spoke, still she never could fairly meet his eye.

The reader may possibly have remarked the singular patience, or rather indifference, with which I had given up my undoubted claims to a flirtation with Ellen during our stay at Ballymacrocodile; but the real fact was, that dulcet sport, called

“spooning” in military language, becomes wearisome in time, to say nothing of its occasionally suggesting the difference between the sport to the frogs and the boy that pelted them, in the fable; and, therefore, on this occasion, it was my pleasure to appear in the character of an amateur parent or guardian, a sort of out-rigger upon the family canoe, which I perceived was steering alarmingly wild, having in sad truth been recently somewhat piratically overhauled.

Ellen, when we made our appearance, was on the point of commencing one of those simple ballads that she sung with so much feeling and taste, and I was not long in discovering that if Beecher was all ears for the song, he was all eyes for the singer. I recollected my friend now at Dunmanway. I think I must have blushed, but luckily, if I did, there was nobody to detect the change of colour, and if Johnny had

perceived it he would probably have attributed it to the generous, fruity, full-bodied military port we had so lately quitted.

Some of Nanny's drawings were lying upon the table; very creditable sketches they were, too, and Johnny won her young heart out of hand by *really* admiring them; so that by the time that I had done complimenting Ellen on her singing, and had finished taking the measure of Mr. Beecher, I found my friend Johnny teaching Nanny some artful dodges in shading, with little Alice on his knee. I need not say what Mrs. O'Reilly's feelings were towards him; indeed, at one time, I thought I perceived her flapping her fins, as if mentally bestowing her maternal benediction upon his young head; and I have no doubt the worthy divine himself would have been highly gratified had Johnny then and there announced his entire adhesion to the Thirty-nine Articles, including the fortieth,

or additional Irish one—viz., the glorious, pious, and immortal memory of the great and good King William, who saved us from popery, slavery, brass money, and wooden shoes. They say that this is not so much insisted on now; but the reader must remember that this is a chronicle of some years ago, and that something particular had happened about tithes in the few years preceding.

The day had been awfully hot, and there was still a good deal of twilight left; indeed, it was more daylight, for we had been driven from the dinner-table so early by the horse conversation that it was still early, hardly, I think, eight o'clock; it was speedily found that everybody, every two or three minutes, took a look at the glass door into the garden, and not long afterwards we unanimously voted the drawing-room close, and adjourned into the open air. Johnny was immediately dragged off

by Nanny and Alice to a little spot which the latter called her own, and where she amused herself planting flowers, taking them up again to see how they were growing, pouring water over them to see the water disappear in the earth, digging, as a mode of stimulating a growing crop, and various other juvenile eccentricities of horticultural nonage.

Ellen, pale and agitated, for a length of time seemed determined that nothing should separate her from me, which, at first, I was inclined to interpret in the regular military manner, but subsequently found reason to alter my opinion. Beecher seemed nervously anxious to separate her from us; and it struck me that Mrs. O'Reilly was desirous that he should do so, as indeed she was, though not precisely to afford them a *tête-à-tête*, her object being to have a confidential conversation with me.

When two such heavenly bodies as the

mama and the lover are in conjunction the horoscope is not difficult to calculate. Ten minutes saw Ellen and Beecher alone, and something particular evidently on the point of happening, whilst Mrs. O'Reilly and I were at the other end of the garden, talking about buttermilk and flummery. The subject was not, however, a very interesting one; it was doomed to be short-lived—a divergence to stirabout prolonged, but could not sustain it; it was like the indispensable but unmeaning advance of the first pawn at chess; another moment, and the game began.

“You never met Mr. Beecher before, did you?” asked the lady; “he used to be one of the dearest friends we had, but we have not seen him now for some time.”

“I see him for the first time this evening,” I replied; “he seems a gentlemanly sort of man.”

“Indeed he is,” replied Mrs. O'Reilly,

“and much more than that; a more sincere, zealous, and hard-working minister than him the whole diocese cannot produce. He and Ellen used to be the dearest friends; and I will confess to *you*, I did entertain a hope that something would have come of it, and so, indeed, did Mr. O'Reilly, who would have made any sacrifice, compatible with justice to his other children, to bring it about. They would have been poor, certainly, but neither have been expensively brought up, as you know; as Mr. O'Reilly says, ‘Better is a dinner of herbs where peace is, than a stalled ox and contention therewith;’ and he was one that we could thoroughly trust. I believe myself that he was, and indeed is, still devotedly attached to Ellen; and I think she was not very far from returning his attachment, until—you know how calculated your friend, Captain Hawkins, is to win a girl’s heart; and since the 110th arrived here we have

seen but little of poor dear Mr. Beecher. I suppose, now that they are gone—”(confound his impertinence, thought I; does he think the 120th cannot have their own way with women as well as the 110th? I’ve a great mind—however, I was merciful, as, indeed, I always am; and the poor mother proceeded :) “He came here yesterday. It is seven long Irish miles to his house; but he thinks nothing—at least, he used to think nothing of riding here to tea, and back again; and it went to my heart to hear him talk of ‘old times,’ for I much fear that what he means by ‘old times’ are gone for ever.”

She paused for a moment here; but I had nothing to say. I felt the blood tingling in every vein of my forehead, for I could pretty well divine what was passing in her mind with respect to an act of a friend of mine that I could neither repair nor justify—an act to which I could not

help feeling myself and my comrades as in some degree accessory, considering the universal toleration, not to say encouragement, extended to the unprincipled trifling with woman's affections, which formed one of our principal pastimes in country quarters.

"Have you heard from Captain Hawkins lately?" asked she, suddenly. "I know gentlemen do not correspond very regularly; but I thought—perhaps he might have—written to you."

"I have heard nothing from him since I arrived here," answered I, thinking with some little shame upon the letter I had received *the day before*—and which I thought it discreet to say nothing about. "Men, you know, seldom write to one another unless for some specific reason."

"Captain Cobb," said Mrs. O'Reilly, with much emotion, "you can surely make allowance for what a mother's feelings must

be when her daughter's happiness is so nearly concerned; and forgive me if I ask you, did he ever tell you of any attachment subsisting between him and Ellen? Surely *he* is not one of those cruel triflers who win women's hearts and then fling them to the vultures?"

This was a staggerer. My private opinion was that he was. I was also of opinion that a gay young officer, with a heart as light and as hard as a cricket ball, was likely to take a very different view of the matter from an anxious mother, and I assured her that he had made no communication to me on the subject (Jesuitically salving my conscience with the reflection that in his letter to me about Ellen there was not a word about love), that I did not consider him likely to think seriously of matrimony as yet, and that if he did I doubted his having the means.

"But surely," returned Mrs. O'Reilly,

looking anxiously, nay, imploringly, into my face, "surely no man of honour would win a girl's affections, unless he really had the means of marrying her as well as the intention?"

"No man of true honour would," answered I, the abandoned hypocrite that I was; "but, unhappily, men's honours fit loosely when bright eyes are in the case."

"But do you really think," abruptly asked Mrs. O'Reilly, upon whom a new and ghastly light seemed breaking—"do you really think that he means to desert Ellen?"

"I really have no knowledge, or means of forming an opinion on the subject," replied I, now painfully convinced that my worst forebodings were realized; "I do not know what may have passed between Miss O'Reilly and Hawkins. I do hope, most sincerely, that it will be nothing that you will have cause to repent of; but

at all events, certainty is better than suspense, in any case; and, as soon as I can get a few days leave, I will run over to Dunmanway, and, without letting him see *my* hand, find out how matters really stand."

The burst of gratitude which this unimportant offer of service elicited perfectly astounded me. It was, however, almost instantaneously interrupted by our perceiving Ellen entering the house by herself, her face hidden in her hands, and evidently violently agitated. Her mother instantly followed her. I joined Johnny and the girls. Nanny set me digging directly, and kept me hard at work persecuting mother earth till the hour of sunset arrived, and little Alice informed me that the sun was going to heaven, as that luminary disappeared below the horizon.

Soon afterwards I heard the tramp of a horse quitting the rectory. There was an

lected a sensation I had once had, and it gave me the idea that one red-hot devil was tearing my heart and soul to pieces, and a dozen worse ones fighting for the bits. Perhaps it was the recollection of this that made me feel for Ellen that unusual and inconvenient sympathy that kept me silent half the way back to barracks.

"Cobb," said Johnny, seriously, "do you know that, from what I heard from the children, it is my private opinion that that young parson proposed for your friend Ellen to-night."

"I'm sorry to say, Johnny," returned I, "that I agree with you; and that, what is more, she refused him."

"That was not your doing?" said Johnny, gravely.

"No, it was not my doing, Johnny," answered I. "It is a case beyond my reach; but don't say anything about what you've seen to-night."

"You need not tell me that," replied the youth, somewhat offended at the caution; and, indeed, with justice, for he did *not* need it.

"I know that, my dear Johnny," answered I; "but you know what messes our fellows make of any story they get the slightest hint of, and this is a matter peculiarly to be kept quiet."

"But what made her look so wretched and miserable all tea-time?" asked Johnny; "it was not that her father refused him, but she refused him herself; and yet I thought she was going to cry every minute. She had been crying, I'm sure."

"She had, Johnny, and very bitter tears they were," returned I. "She is really very fond of Mr. Beecher, and the giving him pain, though she could in no way help it, gave her intense pain; but unhappily, you see, she could not marry him, because her heart, and I believe a truly loving

heart it is, is given to another man, the more's the pity, for he is unworthy of it, at least, I am afraid so. Now you see, Johnny, a woman can only love one man at a time; it isn't like you, who can love three or four women at the same time.

"Go to the devil!" interjected Johnny, quite roused by this unexpected accusation. "You're another!" continued he; perhaps his conscience began to bore him. "I should be sorry if any trouble did befall them, however; they *are* a very charming family, Cobb, and I am very much obliged indeed to you for introducing me."

Now, thought I to myself, as we plodded once more in silence towards our quarters, here is a pretty illustration of that system of "spooning." Here comes Hawkins, who will no more marry than fly; he cuts in between this poor devil of a parson, who would have made her an excellent husband, and whom she would have made an admi-

rable wife. Then goes a gash into Beecher's heart that he'll take down into his grave with him. Then he leaves Ellen dying for love of him, with no more compunction than if he left a sick charger in an hospital stable. She was ready to cry her eyes out to-day at being obliged to inflict all this pain on her true lover; what will she feel when she finds her chosen one false, faithless, worthless? What sufferings are not in store for her! Well! then goes a gash into her heart that she will take down into *her* grave with her, that, very likely, will hurry her down there, too. All this to fill up Mr. Hawkins' leisure hours, which are twenty-four per diem; and now he is performing some similar devilments at Dunmanway, and calls it fun. God forgive us our innocent mirth!

Upon reaching the barracks I found myself completely exhausted. What with Mrs. O'Reilly's conversation, tea, and moralizing, I had appeared in the character of a

respectable member of society for nearly three hours, and the effort was tremendous. I now indemnified myself with some brandy-and-water and cigars, and learned that some work had been cut out for me during my absence, some brilliant military festivities having been decided upon, the arrangements of which could, of course, be intrusted to none but me.

CHAPTER VII.

MARS AND VENUS—HIDDEN ATTRACTIONS—POETRY
OF INCOMPREHENSIBILITY — LADIES FANCIES —
TROPHIES OF FOREIGN CAMPAIGNS — TROPHIES
OF HOME CAMPAIGNS.

THE 18th of June now drew rapidly near, and the 18th of June was a day upon which the gallant Ducrow, in his character of Hero of Waterloo, was accustomed pre-eminently to make an ass of himself, or perhaps I might say more properly, to clothe the ass he was in a lion's skin. Not of sufficient rank to come within the list of Apsley House, he commonly performed, or caused to be performed, a banquet of the sort himself; either a public dinner at mess,

or a parade of the band, with ices and attentive officers for the ladies who loved him; at which he fought all his battles o'er again, and thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain; and not only made long military speeches about divisions, brigades, regiments, squadrons, half squadrons, and other combinations of men and horses, varied with biographical sketches of Ney, Soult, Grouchy, Blucher, Gneisenau, Thielman, and about five and thirty distinguished British officers, but, as Johnny informed me, used to recite lengthy poetical passages on the same subject—such as that celebrated one, which the reader no doubt remembers, beginning

“There was was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then,
Her beauty and her chivalry,”

(Viz. Major Ducrow.)

“And bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men f”

viz., the 20th heavy dragoons; or sometimes that (in its time) not less celebrated one, that the reader has no doubt forgotten, that commences—

“On that great day of milling, when blood lay in
lakes,
When kings held the bottle, and Europe the
stakes.”

Nay, on one occasion, it is reported that the presence of an eminent tragedian inspired the breast of Ducrow with a Shakesperian ardour, and that, seeing that Shakespeare could have written nothing about Waterloo (for a reason he had), the gallant officer took the next best battle, and learned by heart that spirited address that we all learned at school, and that, if my memory serves me rightly, begins—

“D—n him that wishes for more men from Eng-
land.”

He also exhibited, carefully laid out in

his quarters, for the admiration of the fair worshippers of Mars, the jacket and trousers in which he was wounded at Waterloo, marked with his blood; and I never heard any satisfactory reason assigned why his shirt and stockings were not preserved for exhibition too. Then there was an eagle (from one of the men's shakoes), and a horse shoe, and a bit of dried finger, and a few bullets, and a book of French songs that belonged more to Venus than to Mars, and a picture of Shaw the Life-guardsman.

He also, as Johnny informed me, invariably proposed the health of old Blucher and the Prussian army after dinner, which reminded somebody else to propose the Duke of Wellington and the heroes who fought and bled under him, for which he returned thanks himself; and at a later period of the evening, when the liquor he had swallowed had found its way to his eyes, and he had arrived at the crying

stage, he used to throw a shade of the ludicrous over the solemn recollections of the brave comrades who died in arms and honour in that imperial battle, by proposing, with a maudlin melancholy, the memory of the dead. In short, the quarters of the 20th became, for the day, a sort of military puppet-show, wherein Ducrow enacted the part of Punch very much to his own satisfaction.

Upon this occasion it was our intention to give a grand entertainment to the neighbourhood on the anniversary; we wished to establish a system of pic-nics, and other sociabilities; for Messrs. Ducrow, Holster, Simpkins, and Co., had agreed that the natives were very tol-lol for such a place (the fact being that the society was remarkably good, few places could boast of a more creditable resident gentry), and as a beginning, it was as well to fix upon the 18th of June as any other day, and it served to gratify the 20th.

intended, in case it rained, to avail ourselves of its shelter for dining in, and at all events, in case of good weather, to use it as a cool and agreeable retreat from the heat of the day.

From a corner of this block of buildings arose the indispensable donjon keep, and the whole was mantled over with ivy of a luxuriance that only Ireland can present. There was, of course, the usual court-yard or lawn, and the main rampart of the external wall was pierced by several breaches, most of which were practicable for ladies, and well calculated for the display of ankles and something more; in front, a gently sloping lawn, flanked on one side by a luxuriant shrubbery of arbutus, and on the other by the woods through which we were to find our way back to the barracks, offered its level sward for our sylvan repast, if the clerk of the weather was favourable.

This little bit of turf was, I should imagine, about two acres in extent, that is to say, about a hundred and fifty yards long, by seventy wide, and terminated in a precipice of fifty or sixty feet sheer descent, broken and wooded, at the bottom of which rippled and gurgled the picturesque little Avonbeg, to which shining river two tolerably safe paths led down from the plateau on which stood the castle of Kin-cora. The Avonbeg was full of trout, and several of the gentlemen of the party whipped their way to the place of assemblage, and by their united efforts furnished us with an amazing quantity of that delicate comestible; indeed, rather more than the regimental gridirons could altogether manage.

The preparations we made to delight the eyes, the ears, and the palates of our visitors, differed so little from those customary on the like occasions (excepting,

that as it was under one hand, it did not rain roast fowls as it generally does) that I shall not stop to describe them, unless, that upon arriving we found a guest that I, for one, had not invited—viz. a most awful looking eagle, which I speedily ascertained had been surreptitiously introduced by Ducrow, to afford him an opportunity of delivering himself of some extraordinary quantity of perilous stuff about the capture of two imperial French eagles at Waterloo; which feat, by-the-bye, he was beginning to believe had been a performance of his own.

THE HOUR ARRIVED AND THE MAN.

Ducrow, in full uniform, with his orderly behind him, rode up at a walk to the gate of Kincora, and the sun of Waterloo began to shine upon that castle, a puffy Phœbus, yet glorious withal. Ducrow, the slayer alike of French cuirassiers and of English ladies, who pierced hearts equally with his

sword and his eyes, was a plump little Christian, like a bearded baby. I do not know whether he was so well protected on the 18th of June, 1815, as he was on that day, 18—, but I can answer for it that on that latter day, all from his waist upwards was pistol or sabre proof; at least two inches of padding separated the Waterloo medal he wore with such pride from his manly breast. His sash was drawn to a point of tightness as to make his waist a hard solid column, off which shot would have glanced as off a marble pillar, and underneath that there lurked, as I was credibly informed, what he called a belt, but which a jury of milliners would infallibly have pronounced stays. Of course I need not say that he was very particular indeed about his boots, and had bitter bad corns in consequence; or that he employed some horrible hogwash to make his moustachioes hideous. Benignant nature saved him

much trouble about his hair, which was now, in whatever part of time or space 1826 is, having disappeared with that year, and never been heard of since.

I never could discover what it was that gave Ducrow the colossal opinion he possessed of his own irresistibility among the fair sex, still less how it was that, somehow or other, wherever he went, some fair hand or other was ready to pat the greasy monster, and some bright eye looked brighter on his uncouth gambollings. He was not well born, he was not well bred, he was not well read. He did not dance well, he did not talk well, he did not spell well. He had no voice for singing, he had no ear for music, he had no eye for beauty. He loved nothing but himself, he worshipped nothing but himself, he trusted nothing but himself. I suppose he had a sort of a soul; but it was so well wrapped up, that no one on this earth had ever discovered it in the mass of

animal life in which it was bedded, like a toad in a rock. I dare say he had a heart, to keep his blood moving. I dare say he had a head; for brandy-and-water cannot be swallowed without a mouth to put it in.

I was too old a hand to be taken in by his superhuman braggings of his unearthly valour. I knew that all the sound and fury simply meant, that when the trumpets of the 20th sounded the advance, Lieut. Ducrow advanced, as did the 350 officers, non-commissioned officers, trumpeters, and privates of that corps, and several thousands of others; and, most probably, when the musket ball he glorified himself about so much hit him, he did not set up a very dismal howling, as an Italian greyhound might be supposed to do.

Nevertheless the fact is unquestionable, that numbers of well-bred and well-educated young ladies did worship this Mumbo Jumbo, did write him valentines, of which

he had an album, for he showed it me, and I recognised both Clementina Mullins' handwriting and that of poor Arabella Boyd (who missed Beauty Bill's heart, as her brother did his body); that did give him locks of their hair, for I saw them, woven into a very pretty pattern like Berlin wool, and sufficiently numerous to produce a very delicate effect, from the minute shades of difference, from the deepest black to what he himself, in his horse language, called a washy chestnut; that did squeeze his hand, for I have seen it myself. A girl, when she squeezes a man's hand, has a peculiar expression in her face, that I could swear to at any time or place.

How all these things came to pass I no more know than I or the author of the "Vestiges of Creation" know how the world was made. By all rule or common sense, the man ought to have been repulsive: to most women he was attractive. Why,

women only could tell; and of course they would not. The first and last complete confession ever made by woman stands good for the sex to this day,—a slimy reptile crawls in, when angels stand despairing without. “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”

CHAPTER VIII.

ANNIVERSARY OF WATERLOO—FEAST THE NATIVES
STRIKING INSTANCE OF CELTIC GRATITUDE—
THE STING IN THE VOICE.

OUR fat friend certainly afforded me and Johnny a great deal of amusement, by the refreshing coolness with which he took upon himself the honours of the day, and the receiving all the guests.

“Such beauty and fashion is overwhelming,” said he to one constellation of Bally-macrocodile stars whom he bowed in backwards, like a manager with royalty; “my courage fails me; I am more daunted than I was at Waterloo.”

Johnny was going off into a roar of laughter when he looked at me ; he there saw an imperturbable gravity, with a slight twinkle in the eye, which he immediately imitated as well as he could. To be sure, what obligations Lady Elizabeth is under to me. If this should ever meet her eye, and Edith is still — well — Johnny soon after came up to me.

“Cobb,” said he, “why are the O’Reilly’s not come yet?”

“Upon my word, Johnny,” replied I, “I can assign no reason that would satisfy so profound a philosopher as you.”

“I shall take care of Nanny,” said he; “she’s a good girl, and very fond of me.”

“Do, Johnny,” said I, “it will be very kind.”

“Why, you know,” said Johnny, “as she don’t know any one else, and has not many gaieties, it *will* be a kindness to a young thing like that to pay her attention, and

she will really enjoy herself the more for it; so I'll take care of her, and Mary Ann O'Malley may go to the devil."

"That's a very proper sentiment, Johnny, and I honour you for it," replied I. "Well, here they are at last, and the old gentleman himself with them; I am very glad to see that he is come."

"That was my doing," said Johnny, who, I may remark, had established himself in a sort of tame cat footing at the rectory already. "I persuaded him that there could be nothing sinful at these sort of festivities by daylight, and he admitted that dining on the grass was canonical if not apostolical. I like him and I like Ellen; there is no finery about them. I hate fine ladies."

"I agree with you, Johnny," said I; "the fine lady is not much of a lady. There is something open and expanded in the mind of a lady, there is nothing that is not close and contracted in that of a fine lady."

"Then, they snub one so?" said my ingenuous youth.

"Yes, Johnny," said I; "they are not quite ladies, only ladylets; and the fine gentleman is the son of his mother."

"I know that without your telling me," retorted Johnny, indignantly; "it's a wise child that knows its own father, maybe;—but its mother—"

"Peace! Johnny," said I; "and don't splutter when you talk; know that there are two beings in the man,—the man that is born, and the man that is bred."

"Like a ham and veal sandwich, I suppose," said Johnny, running off to seize upon Nanny, for the young reprobate had no taste for my profound disquisitions upon the human mind; and, on the faith of a confessor, I believe he was right.

I never saw Ellen looking better than she did that morning. She was in higher spirits than ever I had seen her; was de-

lighted at her father having come, for she concluded in her dear innocent mind that a pic-nic must be as great a source of enjoyment to him as it was to her and Nanny; was much pleased at seeing that young lady carried off by Johnny to the top of the towering donjon keep, that object of awful interest to youth,—finally was, of course, much gratified and flattered at finding herself the subject of my special solicitude—at least she told me so, and I believed her. I generally believed what she said.

“Let us climb up to the top of the tower, too,” said she; “there is a beautiful view from there; you can trace the Avonbeg through twelve gentlemen’s places; so that its banks are adorned with every description of wood, and lawn, and rock, and shrubbery; and I think people who build houses by the banks of a river, and a very beautiful river, generally show more taste

than when they build on a spot where there is no great natural beauty. I suppose the genius of the place taps the architect on the shoulder! I wish to heaven Gaspar de Lacy had put banisters to his stairs! There, you go on before. Look out of this window—see what a frame it makes, and for what a picture! There is a great deal in this neighbourhood that reminds me of England,” continued she, her eye lighting as she gazed upon the fair scene that lay stretched at her feet; and the light in her eye that day was clear and serene,—not the troubled and murky gleam that I have seen shoot from it, when a chance word roused thoughts that had fangs; she was communing with nature now, and its harmony swept over her mind, soothing and smoothing jagged rents as it passed—indeed, the influence of that scene extended itself even to me, so much so that I wished most sincerely that all the country

round, and everything that I saw, belonged to me.

“I know no other part of Ireland,” she said, “in which the natural beauties of rock and river are combined with a complete civilization of the landscape; for even humble as those cottages there that you see are, they have a few trees about them that make them look like homes, and not like cantonments; they all have gardens, such as they are, and flourishing hedges, with fine hedgerow timber, fill the place of those dreary, dry, stone walls, that disfigure other parts of the country so much; and yet,” continued she, with a slight shudder, “there is not a district in Europe so stained with blood as this—no, not one; we have good cause to say so. Do you see that white house yonder, with the three large oaks in the lawn?”


“Beyond the turn in the road?” said I.

“The same,” said Ellen, gazing on it

with a melancholy interest. "My grandfather lived there; he was one of the most popular country gentlemen of his day, and the good he did in the neighbourhood was inconceivable; indeed, it is to him that this country owes a great deal of its improved character. Well, when the great rebellion of '98 broke out, he thought no one would harm a hair of his head; and when most of the other country gentlemen went into the towns for safety, he remained there, trusting to the love of the people, which he had so richly deserved. One morning, a crowd of people came to the house and asked to see him; he went out, thinking that it was on justice business, which in those days was generally administered from the steps of the hall door. They cut off his head on those steps, they kicked it about that lawn, and the first that my grandmother knew of anything having happened was, when the head—all

bloody and disfigured—was kicked through the window into the room where she was sitting at breakfast.”

Having given me this agreeable sketch of the pastimes of the neighbourhood, Ellen proceeded to the roof of the tower. I, nevertheless, continued most sincerely to wish I owned everything I could see, with all its playful eccentricities. I had great faith in a good conscience and a correct eye, reasonable rents and a steady hand, kindness to tenants and a long over-and-under double-barrelled pistol. I had an idea that my hand could keep my head; if not, those might keep who could catch; at all events, I had rather be shot at for thirty thousand a-year than for eleven and sevenpence a-day. Resolving these things in my mind, I followed Ellen's ankles up to the top, when we found, as we expected, Nanny and Johnny, my valiant ensign looking as black as thunder, for Mary Anne



O'Malley was there before him, making eyes at him that would draw a duck off a pond.

Mary Anne had got there alone, so that he had no earthly means of shaking her off till we appeared; upon which godsend, Johnny, with remarkable military promptitude, for which I gave him great credit, saddled me with her at once, and made his escape. The glance the lady shot after him reminded me of a certain passage in the history of one of the children of Israel; and if I read the glance of Ellen's eye aright, she, too, was recalling some portion of the thirtieth chapter of Genesis.

"Is it the first time ever you've been up here, Captain?" asked Mary Anne, when she was a little better; "it is an elegant view from here, is not it?"

I answered that it was an elegant view, and Mary Anne proceeded to point out its beauties more in detail. "That's Poguena

Gollagan Castle," said she, "the seat of the O'Clancy family. Nan Clancy was engaged to Major Mason of the Heavies, but he had a rich aunt that would not let him marry any but an Honourable Miss. Old O'Clancy was county member, and got four thousand pounds down, and no end of places, for voting for the Union. Tom, the present man, is Churchwarden of the Exchequer now, two thousand a-year, and nothing to do. That's Mount Molyneux. You know Clara and Sarah Molyneux, Captain; they're here already. Set them up with their laylock bonnets"—(Ellen subsequently spelt this word for me; she spelt it l i l a c). "Clara was going to be married to Leftennant Ridge of the Rifles, only his father would not hear of the match; the more shame for him, the old anchorite. But the way that Captain Hobson of the Fusiliers threw over Sarah was shameful. That's the reason she's so cross; all she says is bitterly flavoured with long spinsterhood."

Of course all this must have been highly interesting to Ellen, and my patience, never superabundant, ebbed to zero. I had no idea of letting her be tormented, and was on the point of coolly stopping the current of Mary Anne's "accidents and disasters at marriage," by carrying off Ellen, when luckily the band struck up below, and gave me a decent excuse for descending to the court-yard.

"She is a good-hearted creature, Mary Anne O'Malley," said Ellen, when we had fairly shaken her off; "she has educated all her younger sisters, and saved them the expense of a governess, and they have no money to spare at Newtown Mount O'Malley. She makes the best nurse, too, in the world, for her mother is always ailing. She would make an excellent wife."

"Tell Johnny so," said I; which she instantly did.

Johnny would not have been Johnny if

he had not flared up at this ; and whilst he was reddening and spluttering, and we were laughing at him — especially Ellen, who used to take great delight in quizzing him—I heard a voice, which I did not recognise, inquire which was Captain Cobb and as one does when one hears one's own name mentioned, looked round to see who it was.

That moment Ellen's arm griped mine like a vice ; I felt her whole weight thrown upon me at once ; she seemed not to lean against me, but, as it were, to grow upon me, for her knees and her hips seemed to seek support from me at the same moment, and I felt a convulsive shudder creep over her from head to foot. I turned suddenly towards her, naturally very much startled, and looked in her face. There was an expression half-horror, half-bewilderment, such as I have seen in the countenance of those who have received an

overwhelming electric shock, but it was gone in a moment. She passed her hand over her face, and stood up again once more, erect, but still leaning heavily on me, and looked into my face with a melancholy smile, in which I thought I could discern, that whatever the shock was, she was very glad that it had struck her when on the arm of a friend.

“It was a momentary giddiness,” said she; and the blood that had left her face now began to rush furiously back. “It comes and goes; do get me a glass of water.”

At this moment the gentleman who had been inquiring for me came up, and introduced himself as a brother of James Hawkins, from whom he brought me a letter of introduction.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SHUDDER AT THE SOUND—THE GUAGING OF THE
LETTER—THE SHADOW OF THE AVENGING ANGEL
— IT STEALS ACROSS THE PATH—THE KEY-NOTE
IN THE OVERTURE—THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN
—SIGNIFICANT SILENCE—SIGNIFICANT LOQUA-
CITY—THE MELTING OF IRON—THE SOUND OF
THE TRUMPET.

THERE is, it is well known, a mysterious similitude between the voices of brothers and sisters, but my coarser organs had not detected it. I have no doubt, however, that Ellen had, and that some subtle analogy of tone had struck a chord in her heart that had vibrated thus fiercely. Robert Hawkins told me that he had just

arrived from Dunmanway, where he had been spending a few days with his brother; that he had reached the barracks that morning, and found that I had started for Kincora (having to be there early, to see that all was right), but had been hospitably treated by my brother officers, who were about starting, and brought on here.

I expressed my gratification at making his acquaintance; said that I had often heard James speak of him (which was a lie, but hospitable); hoped that he would spend a few days with us, and forthwith introduced him to Mary Anne O'Malley, who, I trusted, would keep him in safe custody till I was ready to attend to his enjoyment myself.

I did not introduce him at first to Ellen, as I did not precisely know what she might wish, and, indeed, was anxious to read Hawkins' letter before taking any steps in that direction. It was a fortunate decision

I had not a word to say at the time. In an
instant I saw that he was not
a man to be trifled with. She had
been so much with him and had seen the image
of his power in the way of his words,
and I had seen the same thing so I
knew that I must not even think of making
any more of him. I saw that she could not
do it, and that I must do it myself. It
was a great thing to have to do at a
time when I was so much in the events,
and I saw that I had no doubt
of my own strength more than the mere
fact that I was a man. And with this
I turned then for a time to her
mother and turned her face of the recesses
of the crypt which now resembled a maga-
zine of commodities to peruse it undisturbed.

I have no objection to confessing that I
great obligations to instinct.
would boast of their foresight,
ration, their prudence, their

judgment; yet how constantly do we see foresight, penetration, prudence, and judgment scattered to the four winds of heaven, like chaff? All these things are within the jurisdiction of circumstances; but from a true instinct there is no appeal short of inspiration.

In this case, an instinct I can neither define nor account for, warned me against opening Hawkins' letter, though it seemed only a common letter of introduction, in Ellen's presence. When I did open it, I found it contained a note addressed to her, an agreeable discovery had it been made when the letter was first delivered to me, for, as a matter of course, the note would have dropped out, address uppermost, in the presence of the assembled world of Ballymacrocodile. My letter ran thus:—

“Dunmanway, June 15th, 18—.

“MY DEAR COBB,

“Some of my ancestors must have

on my part, at least for the time; for on sounding Ellen, I found that she was altogether undecided on the subject. She half wished to know him, half feared the image he suggested; she hung upon his words, but winced at the sound of his voice; so I determined to give her some time to make her mind up about it, and if she could not do so, then make it up for her myself. It was necessary, with a view to arrive at a right decision, that I should, at all events, read Hawkins' letter, which I had no doubt contained something more than the mere introduction of his brother; and with this object I restored Ellen for a time to her mother, and retired into one of the recesses of the crypt, which now resembled a magazine of comestibles, to peruse it undisturbed.

I have no objection to confessing that I am under great obligations to instinct. Many men would boast of their foresight, their penetration, their prudence, their

judgment; yet how constantly do we see foresight, penetration, prudence, and judgment scattered to the four winds of heaven, like chaff? All these things are within the jurisdiction of circumstances; but from a true instinct there is no appeal short of inspiration.

In this case, an instinct I can neither define nor account for, warned me against opening Hawkins' letter, though it seemed only a common letter of introduction, in Ellen's presence. When I did open it, I found it contained a note addressed to her, an agreeable discovery had it been made when the letter was first delivered to me, for, as a matter of course, the note would have dropped out, address uppermost, in the presence of the assembled world of Ballymacrocodile. My letter ran thus:—

“Dunmanway, June 15th, 18—.

“MY DEAR COBB,

“Some of my ancestors must have

committed some most outrageous and unexpiated sin, to bring down upon me the punishment of being quartered in this semi-putrified hog's-nest. The filthiness, the dreariness, the wretchedness, and the loneliness—I never knew what it was to be lonely before. My brother Robert, whom I recommend to your protection, will describe its indescribable superhellishness, and the state that I am in, at least, the little that is left of me. I trust to your friendship to deliver the enclosed; I know it is a task that will not much embarrass you, who have that awful skill in the matter of when, where, and how. I believe I ought not to have written the letter, but I could not help it. How do you like Ellen? You never wrote. I wish you would try and write to me sometimes. Everything here is so dreary, and my links with the civilized world consist of the weekly hamper from the messman (for the natives here are incapable of preparing

food fit for human consumption), and the occasional paper that somebody thinks of sending every now and then. Ballymacrocodile is fairy-land compared to this sink of savagery. However, I shall get leave in autumn, and it is not clear to me that my military career is not drawing fast to a close. The everlasting 'Open pans,' 'Examine arms,' is getting inconceivably wearying. Such an occupation, day after day, year after year, for a reasoning being! Yet I have hardly qualified myself for anything better. Do you think I could learn to play the flute? Have you heard Ellen sing 'When the stars on the rolling waters?' make her sing it if you have not. I wish you would give me your opinion as to how money is to be made now. You say that it is always to be made by those who have patience and pluck, and I should like to be able to say I was worth a clear six hundred a-year. I suppose one might set up a cot-

tage on the banks of the Wye on that, where you will always find a spare bed. I need not enjoin caution in the delivery of the enclosed note. Those who have actually caught a weazel asleep, and shaved his eyebrows, have a right to venture upon cautioning you, and those only. Have the Boyds tried any of their tricks upon any of your youngsters, or have they had enough of militant matrimony? Hymen on a hair-trigger! We have heard that it was better to marry than burn; in this case I think it is better to fire than marry. Adieu. May your shadow never be less.

“JAMES HAWKINS.

“P. S. Let me know how you get on at the Rectory. I suppose Ellen is as gay as a lark again. Does she ride much?”

I read this letter a second time to find the key-note. I speedily struck it. It appeared to me to go somewhat high—

higher, perhaps, than could be sustained. In the plains of Australia, thought I to myself, there are those who go out for wool and come home shorn; on the steppes of the Caspian there are those who make prisoners and find they have caught Tartars. In the playing with edge-tools there is danger to the fingers; and on the morning of Actium, Mark Antony little thought of quitting the fight for the reason he did. There's that confounded fellow of Popkins's putting the two roast turkeys within three feet of one another! How *would* these unhappy 120th get on if I left them!

I rose now to resume my multifarious duties, but found that Johnny, who certainly did my training great credit, had already perceived and rectified the turkey blunder, and that the preparations for the feast were proceeding favourably. Ducrow had collected a circle round him; he was killing his fifth cuirassier, had broken his

fourth square of the Imperial Guard, and was rapidly approaching his celebrated dash at the Emperor's person, which we all know would have nipped in the bud the knotty question, whether that potentate was a guest or a prisoner on board of the Bellerophon, by setting him down to a comfortable supper with F. M. the Duke of Wellington, had not Ducrow's charger been killed by the last cannon-shot fired by what had been a French army that morning. I had no time to attend to his balderdash, but proceeded at once to seek out Robert Hawkins, who, I perceived, had got exceedingly tired of Mary Anne; as, indeed, he well might, for her conversation ran mainly upon the private history of her friends, who being utterly unknown to him, did not much interest him.

"Are you fond of fishing?" asked I, edging off, and drawing him by degrees after me; for I wanted to get him clear of

Mary Anne. "There is very good fishing about here."

"It is a favourite pursuit of mine," replied he, favouring my sheering-off movement with great ingenuity and alacrity; "indeed, it was principally for that that I came over to Ireland."

"We'll set you to work in earnest to-morrow," said I; "we have some fellows in the regiment that like to be at the one end of a line when there is a fish at the other. But how did you leave James?"

"He was bored to death," returned Hawkins; "and, indeed, I do not much wonder at it. I never saw such a wretched hole as he is quartered in. He'd give anything to be back here. I never saw him so low either; but I can fancy that sort of life being very depressing."

"Depressing is no word for it," replied I; "it is crushing, positively scrunching—I know it well. Is there anybody here you wish to be introduced to?"

"Thank you," said he; "I will come to you when I do wish. Who is that girl you were speaking to when I first spoke to you?"

"That," answered I, watching him narrowly, "is Miss O'Reilly, the daughter of the rector of the parish. Did not James ever say anything to you about her?"

"No; I do not recollect his ever mentioning the name of O'Reilly," returned he, and the significance of his silence did not escape me; the inference I drew from it, however, merely confirmed an opinion I had already formed. "He told me about some Miss Boyds and Miss Hoopers; he did not speak much of the young ladies of the place, which surprised me, for he is generally a universal philanderer."

The pitcher that goes often, thought I— but my attention was attracted by a conversation between Mary Anne O'Malley and Miss Molyneux, which I do not believe

they intended me to hear, and hope they will pardon my repeating.

"That is a mighty pretty ring you have, Julia," said Mary Anne; "where did you get it?"

"Grandmamma gave it me," replied Julia; "it is a jewel."

"Well, I never wear rings when there's dancing," said Mary Anne.

"Why not?" asked the other.

"Sure it might hurt one's hand," said Mary Anne.

"Do your fingers swell, then, in dancing?" asked Julia. "Papa says his do with long walks."


"No, it wasn't that I meant," replied the O'Malley; "you know, whenever one's partner squeezes one's hand—"

"But do your partners squeeze your hand?—nobody ever squeezes mine. I should not feel flattered if any one did."

"I do not say that any one does, that

would be telling," replied the prudent Maria; "but there's no saying what might happen; and anyhow, one would like to have one's hand in a squeezeable state."

What farther insight into Mary Ann's habits I might have acquired I do not know, for at the moment "the roast beef of old England" came thundering on the breeze. The trout and potatoes, the only hot things, came steaming from within. Major Ducrow's stories evidently, in the opinion of his auditors, lost their point, as I suppose his sword did too, for he never succeeded in killing his ninth cuirassier, with whom he was then engaged; and hastily introducing Hawkins to any of the indigenous beauties I could lay my hands on, I turned off to settle *our* party comfortably together. It was a very agreeable little coterie; and I believe it would have taken a very sharp eye to discover that Ellen and I were watching one another like a brace of lynxes.



Ellen did not succeed in making much of a dinner; a feeble attempt at affecting to eat with an appetite merely showed how much it went against the grain. She made up for it by talking, however. It perfectly astounded me the way she rattled on, and the manner in which she hopped from subject to subject. It seemed as if every fifteenth or twentieth word suggested to her a new train of thoughts, and away she went on the other tack. I have often practised that as a dodge myself, when I have been so unfortunate as to take a tongue-tied damsel in to dinner—a misfortune that will occasionally happen to the most skilful angler for whitebait.

The thundering bouquet in the epergne, for instance, forms a good point to start from. If the flowers are real, you may go off through botany to all the sciences. If they are artificial, through dye-stuff and all the arts. Their colours lead you to the

fashions, and their silver support to the currency question. You may ride off upon the roses of Damascus to the Arabian Nights, and upon the lilies of the field to Exeter Hall; that is to say, if you are clever enough to do it.

Whether Ellen was really talking on a system, or that this display of conversational ability was unconscious on her part, I cannot exactly tell. I only know that she was fulfilling the legitimate mission which everybody is bursting with now-a-days. She was talking "with a purpose," and that purpose was to conceal her thoughts.


It seemed strange to me that a breaking heart should thus overflow. In a similar case, a gloomy silence would have been my resource; yet she was so lively, and made herself so agreeable, that Messrs. Popkins, Simpkins, and Co., voted her a "clipper," a "trump," and a "spicy tit," and decided upon taking her in hand. By the time,

however, that that brandy-nosed innocent, Ducrow, was preparing to propose the health of "Field Marshal Prince Blucher, of Wahlstadt, whose untiring energy and unflinching valour the British army can never, &c. &c."—by the time, in short, that we had just finished the gooseberry fool, I perceived that Ellen was breaking down; the pace had been too good to last, and I thought that the most charitable thing that I could do would be to take up the running myself. It seemed to suit her too, for she was quite exhausted, and I gave her a most interesting history of my appearance at divers foreign courts and the sensation that I created there, for which I have no doubt she was most sincerely grateful. It lasted twenty minutes, and she listened to it with great attention, and did not hear a word of it.

Ducrow the valiant, and his raw-head-and-bloody-bones tomfooleries, bored me to an amount that the *Teredo navalis* never

equalled in stone; so much so, that I shall take it for granted they would equally bore the reader, and shall refrain from chronicling either them or any other of the particulars of that sylvan banquet, which, to say the truth, did not differ materially from the rest of its woodside brethren; unless, perhaps, that the habits of military discipline and foresight obviated the customary scarcity of corkscrews. I have already stated that our plan was, that after dinner and a little rambling about the castle and grounds (in lieu of wine and walnuts), we should stroll back to the barracks (where a dance was on the tapis) along the banks of the Avonbeg, through the woods overhanging which river several paths led to Ballymac-crocodile, an arrangement likely to be productive of a good deal of quiet enjoyment to a good many of the parties included in it.

It seemed to me that Ellen wanted as much quiet as could be got for her; and as



I knew very well that if we went with the crowd, like well-behaved people, we should be worried to death; whilst if we waited like greenhorns till they were all gone, we should be everlastingly stumbling upon some lagging couple or other, whose good wishes we might of course calculate on enjoying to a very high degree, I judged that our best plan was to start at once, a proposal which was immediately acquiesced in, and forthwith carried into effect.

Scarcely, however, had we got fairly into the friendly shade, before Ellen, to my great dismay, communicated to me that she felt very unwell, &c. &c. &c.; low spirits, &c. &c. &c.; she did not know why, &c. &c. &c.; but she was utterly incapable of facing the ball we had so kindly, &c. &c. &c. I was not perhaps *very* much astonished at this; but it certainly was provoking; and after a few unsuccessful efforts to persuade her to change her very, as I

called it, suicidal resolution, I gave up the point, and during our walk home received a great deal of useful and interesting information respecting the names, natures, and properties of an enormous number of wild flowers, which were bursting in unrestrained luxuriance out of the teeming soil around us, and whose natural history was, of course, the subject that entirely engrossed both our thoughts at the moment.

I regret to say that the greater part of this instructive lecture has escaped my memory. I should not be able now to tell the difference between the *naso sanguineus* and the *oculus niger*, nor could I distinguish the *pillula cœrulea* from the *haustus matutinus*, so little was my rough-cast military mind calculated for the delicate delights of botany; but I perfectly recollect whispering to Ellen when I parted with her at the rectory gate, "Look into your reticule when you get into your own room, and *not before.*"

I walked home, if, as I very justly thought at the time, such a thing as a barrack can be called home, full of melancholy reflections. It was no choice of mine that I was so. They *would* come. I should have preferred going on never-minding to all the reflections in Christendom. I did not want them, I'm sure, but still they came. I really believe that at that moment I was a much better man than people gave me credit for being; I would not knowingly have set my foot upon a worm then; I saw sorrow and suffering, and I was touched by the sight; yet there was nothing selfish in my feelings, I wanted nothing for myself. I felt shamed, and repented of many things I once had thought excellent jokes. I longed to try whether I could not do right. I was fully determined to throw the weight of my influence into the scale to bring Hawkins to a proper sense of right and wrong, and I knew that my

intervention would carry weight in that quarter. I fully intended to start for Dunmanway the very next morning, and was mentally debating whether it would be best to take my own jaunting car with me, or trust to the ordinary public conveyances of the country. I was thinking of what I should say to Hawkins, what line I should adopt with him, and of his sneer in his first letter about the devil quoting Scripture, and his application of the remark to me. I was endeavouring to picture myself to myself appearing in the character of the father of a family. I was considering whether I should take four shirts with me or five, in case of unavoidable delays. I was thinking how much better it is to dry tears than to cause them to flow, and wondering what the functions of a groomsman were, and how he was to dress; whether he gave the bridegroom away, or read the responses; whether he came in for any of

the kissing which I somehow associated with a wedding, which august ceremony I had never witnessed. I was puzzling my brains with the traditions I had heard about that dire solemnity and the above-mentioned kissings. Why the bridegroom was accorded the privilege of saluting all the bridesmaids at a moment when he was about to enter upon such an alarming "embarras des richesses" of that sort at home, and resolving that whenever I became entitled to that privilege, I should put it up to public auction, and keep my own breath to cool my own porridge. I was endeavouring to account for the bride's always having the toothache, and determining to ask our regimental surgeon the reason, and I was perpending in my mind who I should get to take my duty while I was away. I felt an universal tenderness of disposition creeping over me and nestling about me. I suppose it is what is

called a melting mood in the annuals; I think I could almost have married myself then, I am nearly sure I could,—if anybody had asked me. It seems altogether like a dream now, but it soon faded away. As I entered the barrack gate the sight that met my eyes was like the sound of a trumpet, I found myself wide awake.

I perceived in a moment that something particular was about to happen; two companies were being paraded and looked as if they meant mischief. Flints were evidently on the rise, ammunition was being served out, women were carrying in washing, all the staff-serjeants were passing about with pencils in their hands; these were the most unmistakeable signs of a job being cut out for somebody, and the simultaneous advance made towards me by the adjutant and my own colour-serjeant the moment I appeared, left no doubt as to

who the happy man was. The orderly book soon disclosed the rest of the secret:

“Detachment to march at 4 A.M. to-morrow—command of Captain Cobb—escort arms and ammunition, &c.”

“Why am I to go?” said I to the adjutant; “it’s a subaltern’s duty. Who ever heard of a captain’s being sent?—besides which, it’s not my turn!”

“The Major said you were to go,” returned he; adding, in a significant tone, “you are to have two companies with you, and your men carry twenty rounds in their packs.”

A low whistle conveyed my comprehension of the meaning of this liberality of powder and shot, and my acquiescence in the arrangement; and though it certainly was a *contretemps* at the moment, still I could not help feeling pleased and flattered at being chosen out of my turn for the

duty; for be it known to the non-military reader, that when the authorities order troops to carry twenty rounds of *ball* cartridge in their knapsacks, it is from a well-grounded suspicion that the sixty rounds in their pouches are in a fair way of being fired away before they return.

CHAPTER X.

GLORY AND THE GALLOWES—THE AVATAR OF THE ASS—
—ADHESIVENESS—DELICATE SENSE OF STATION
—SECOND THOUGHTS—THE BURNING MASK.

UPON inquiry as to what the duty was that required so unusual a force and such portentous preparations, I learned that I was to march three days out, and then receive from the hands of Captain Hobson, of the 115th (Islington Light Infantry), certain cars, containing some supernatural quantity of arms and ammunition, destined for a mysterious fort on the Shannon, of whose existence I then became for the first time aware, which precious and powdery charge I was

to convey in safety to Ballymaccrocodile. It was concluded, as a matter of course, that such an irresistible temptation would be too much for the virtue of the sons of Erin, and that it would be certainly attacked somewhere or other, and therefore a force was sent with it, sufficient to deter any but suicidal lunatics from attempting to take liberties with it. It is, however, difficult to account, upon any reasonable grounds, for Celtic eccentricities.

I confess that, after the first excitement, I was not quite so much pleased with the flattering preference as I ought to have been. In those days, and later, whosoever was employed in defence of the crown, the constitution, and the law, in Ireland, worked with a rope round his neck. The principle of the government was, that as there had been a considerable number of years of Tory misrule in that little-understood island, it was requisite that there should be a

certain number of years of Radical misrule to balance them; and then the parties being quits, the country might start fair (if it survived this reciprocity) for good government. I saw all around the Orangemen, who merely desired law, order, and the British connexion, discouraged and snubbed, whilst the anarchical faction was petted and pampered. I strongly suspected that if I should have a collision with the people (so called), that I should not be judged exactly by the justice of my cause, but by the loudness of the howl set up for my life. However, I consoled myself with that refreshing military hymn,—

“ Why, soldiers, why,
Should we be melancholy, boys?

Why, soldiers, why,
Whose business 'tis to die?”—

I had just brought myself to the proper working point of “don't-care-a-damnnishness,” when my notice was attracted by a

roar of laughter and confusion from the officers' quarters, and turning my eyes in that direction, saw a young jackass precipitated from one of the windows. I half expected to see an old one follow, for I perceived the ejector to be Ducrow, and thought he might have gone mad, but upon hurrying to the spot, found that no such catastrophe was to be expected, though he was foaming at the mouth with rage, the most unendurable part of which was, that as he was in the presence of half the ladies of Ballymacrocodile, it was absolutely necessary that he should keep it in some decent bounds.

I have already made mention of his habit of exhibiting his Waterloo jacket, appointments, and trophies, to the wondering eyes of his admirers; an interesting exhibition, the effect of which was somewhat marred by some of our mischievous young monkeys. How they got into his room in his absence,

or under whose concoction the whole thing was, I do not even now know; but certain it is, that when the triumphant Major headed a procession, consisting of all the beauty and fashion of ten miles round, towards the temple where the precious relics were deposited—viz., his own quarters, upon throwing open the gates of the fane, the assembled multitude then and there beheld that unfortunate young donkey, securely strapped in the Major's arm-chair, with one of its fore hoofs resting on a map of the battle of Waterloo, on which was marked, with a blood-red line, the course of the 20th Heavy Dragoons, a number of crossed swords marking the several spots rendered immortal by some special achievement of Lieutenant Ducrow.

I believe he wanted to call us all out, one after the other, but the crisis settled itself; for, as every one wanted to indulge in the suppressed laughter that the incident

suggested, and no one liked to laugh before the martyred major, a general escape back into the barrack-yard left him alone in his glory. It may be supposed that this military pleasantry gave rise to an amazing quantity of good-natured hilarity to all but the unhappy victim, who did not recover it all the evening, and even forgot to propose, as he had intended, after supper, his solemn toast, "The Memory of the Slain."

I found, when I descended, Jenkins, that soul of wit, busy inflicting riddles on the company. The following specimen may interest the lovers of such rhetorical fireworks.

"What flower reigns over the others?"

Answer: "The rose of the watering-pot rains over the others."

"To what rose is salt water essential?"

Answer: "To herring's roes."

"When is champagne like a growing crop?"

Answer: "When it's sweet" (it's wheat).

"Why is a man in love, going a voyage, turned into an herb?"

Answer: "Because a lover with a C (sea) before him becomes Clover."

"When is Faith a goose?"

Answer: "When it's trussed" (trust).

These were the son of Caradoc's avowed contributions to the evening's amusement; though I suspect his *facetiae* extended rather farther, and that the violent passion he flew into with me when, alluding to Ducrow's martyrdom, I asked him how he, Jenkins, would like to find a he-goat, strapped in his chair, was rather put on for the purpose of getting rid of the subject, than the explosion of any very violent animosity against me, or desire to do me any bodily injury.

However, it was time to begin dancing; and I speedily found myself rolling round the room with Mary Bunyon, the girl that

Hawkins had mentioned as being a good waltzer, but too adhesive for his taste. She was a good waltzer, and she was too adhesive for my taste too. She made me sit out the next quadrille in the tea-room, describing for her edification the glories of Crabstock Castle, the quantity of deer in the park; how the young Ladies Pippin dressed in the morning, when there was no company; when there was any, of course they were dressed in the hoighth of the fashion; and whether my uncle ever drank beer. In which details, as well as all matters concerning the peerage in general, she took that lively interest that is such a charm in Irish society.

Then she made me take her to see all manner of places in the barracks, accompanied by a friend, of course, for propriety. She insisted upon seeing my quarters, which were in a glorious state of deshabelle, consequent upon our preparations for to-

morrow's march; and when I told her that I ought to be making my will instead of making myself amiable to her, considering the service I was going on, she begged I would make my will, which she seemed to think was a process of curious and delicate manufacture, like pen-making and block machinery. She had never seen a will made, and had the greatest curiosity about it, which I did not gratify. In short, it took four dances to get rid of her; and the moment I had fairly shaken her off, Johnny, bursting with laughter, seized upon me; he had been watching for me for some time.

"I say, Cobb," said he, "look; do you see that girl in blue, over there, dancing with Waddilove?"

"Yes, Johnny," replied I; that is Miss Jemima D'Arcy L'Estrange, eldest daughter of Sir Michael Angelo D'Arcy L'Estrange, Baronet, of Plantagenet Castle, in this

neighbourhood, Stephen's Green, Dublin; and Herring-pond Prospect Villa, near Bray; a deputy-lieutenant and magistrate for both counties, and a remarkably high and mighty gentleman jackass."

"Well," said Johnny, "what do you think I just heard her tell Waddilove? She said she never danced with any but horse officers; the foot were never genteel enough."

"And I can tell you something more, Johnny," rejoined I; "her father only calls on the field officers of infantry, because they are mounted; and when the 110th came here, old Jones was still a captain, but he got his majority whilst the regiment was still here; and three days after the "Gazette" came down he found a card for him, bearing the distinguished name of Sir Michael Angelo D'Arcy L'Estrange. There is a compliment paid to a pair of spurs."

At a later period of the evening, the

young lady in question, about whose gloves I perceived a singular smell of turpentine, requested Mrs. Major O'Flaherty to introduce me to her, for what the good Major's wife denominated in public a polka, but privately and confidentially informed me that she considered it a "mighty cosy musical cuddle!" which astounding introduction that lady performed, adding, as she remarked my astonishment, that she knew my uncle, the Earl of Crabstock, whereby, in her estimation, I was elevated to a social equality with the scions of saddlery and hemp and tallow. I bore my honours meekly. I never was in a quarter in Ireland where this worship of cavalry did not prevail. I suppose it is a sort of brogue in the mind; perhaps a proof of that eastern origin so loudly insisted upon—a mysterious sympathy with Pacha's Horsetail, symbolical of his dignity.

The having a Lady Elizabeth for a

mother also, of course, gave Johnny equestrian rank in her eyes; though she knew precisely as much of Lady Elizabeth as she did of Lord Crabstock—viz., was aware of their existence from having read of it in the Peerage. Johnny, who had no expectations of being committed on a capital charge in the course of the next fortnight, as I had, enjoyed the joke more, and nearly drove her into hysterics of horror by depicting a scene in which he figured mending his stockings. This, however, occurred later in the evening; but at the moment that I succeeded in shaking off the tenacious hold of Miss Bunyon, I perceived an arrival which rather astonished me: the door opened, and in sailed Mrs. O'Reilly and her two daughters. Ellen had got better, or changed her mind; I leave my lady readers to pronounce which—*Davus sum, non Œdipus*.

I now thought it advisable to take her

pleasure about introducing Robert Hawkins to her; and receiving a reply of most elaborate indifference, charitably performed that act. Their conversation appeared so interesting, that I could not find it in my heart to interrupt it, but considerably suffered two or three dances (during which I divided myself as well as I could among the surrounding white muslin) before I put in my claims for Ellen's hand. She was feverish and excited.

"I hope I did not startle you to-day," said she, "when I had that sort of—of all-overishness? It is a nervous kind of weakness that I have been subject to all my life, and I believe is not of the slightest consequence. Well, I declare, there's Jane O'Halloran in the old wreath of roses, and she's had them fresh frosted, too,—I wonder where did she get that done. So you are going to escort ever so many guns and powder to the Shannon?—There is Mary

Anne O'Malley, and Captain Holster has entangled his spurs in her petticoat. Take care you don't blow it up—the powder, I mean! It's a dreadful thing to have those attacks—that is, of the nerves. So Mr. Hawkins is going to be put up in your room whilst you are away. He's coming to see us to-morrow. I'll get papa to see about fishing for him (I half misinterpreted this expression), and poor little Johnny Waldgrave going with you, too! Isn't it a burning shame to trust a shrimp like that near fire-arms? What could he do when the stones were flying?"

Thus did she run on. Never did I get in a word, sideways or edgeways; she went away immediately that the dance was over, and again was I electrified by the spasmodic grasp of her hand when we parted. I went to bed myself directly, being too old a soldier not to know the value of a night's rest before a day's work.

Johnny, who was a younger hand, carried on, and consequently did not go to bed at all. I was told he flirted most amazingly. I did not scold him for it. It is an amiable weakness in a minor, but a grave offence in one of mature age, unless he claims the benefit of clergy.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW EVERYBODY ROSE TO MEET US—THE LITTLE
CLOUD IN THE HEAVENS—SYMPTOMS OF MISCHIEF
—THE LADIES TO THE FRONT—BEFORE HAND
WITH THE BARRICADE—PROFESSIONAL DEBATE—
VOCALIZATION OF LEAD—MIRACULOUS ESCAPE OF
THE CONFESSOR FROM HANGING.

WITH respect to the next five days, I have little to narrate. I marched three days, and then took over my charge from Captain Hobson, who informed me that, though he had no serious difficulty, he had been watched and followed the whole time by very suspicious crowds, and though by vigilance, and strong guards at night, he had succeeded in getting on without

accident, he doubted whether I should be so fortunate; at all events, recommending a bright look-out—which I indeed was most religiously determined to keep.

For the first two days Fortune smiled on us. Objects of intense attention to the country people certainly we were, but they did not think fit to take any liberties with us, and we reached our last halting-place unmolested. The next day was the longest march of all; twenty Irish miles—and good measure, too — between five-and-six-and-twenty English. Judging that, by marching two hours earlier than usual, I might anticipate any attempt at stopping me, by slipping past each ticklish point, before any ill-disposed crowd could be assembled, I gave orders that we should march at three, but owing to the difficulty of getting the men together at an unaccustomed hour, we did not clear the town till about a quarter

to four, and our halt for breakfast accordingly occurred about eight.

During the early part of the day I, of course, saw nobody; for the Irish peasant, being in great want of money, and yearly danger of starvation, lies in bed later than any other peasant in the known world; nor then was any commotion observable. At nine we were in motion again, and so, I perceived, was the whole population of the district. However, there was nothing for it but to advance; every mile diminished materially the distance from Ballymaccrodile, whence it was possible O'Flaherty might think of sending out a detachment to meet us; at all events, come what might, the more numerous the mob that attacked us was, the more simple our justification would be. I was so fortunate as to find that all my men were sober. I had my advanced and rear guards in proper shape, and flankers, where the ground admitted of it;

and I looked upon the surrounding aborigines, who were rising in every direction, with proper military philosophy, as probable and proximate food for powder. If wilful will to water, wilful must drench; and if wilful will to fire, wilful must scorch.

We were now rapidly approaching the long straggling village of Clonacrana, when I perceived a considerable crowd through whom I should be compelled to pass. I had a strong suspicion that some mischief was intended here, and I saw from the way that my advanced guard looked at their arms as they entered that they shared my opinion; but the street was broad—it would be impossible effectually to barricade it; and observing that the houses were very low and mean, incapable of giving much protection to assailants should they venture upon attacking me from them, I did not feel much apprehension as to the result. I moreover remarked, that they were nearly

all thatched, and mentally resolved, that if a single shot came out of one of them, that house should be wrapped in a great coat of flame before ten minutes were over, at least if straw burnt as I supposed it would. I was fully determined, be the consequences what they would to myself individually, whoever took liberties with the detachment entrusted to my command should feel the weight of the tiger's paw.

As my advanced guard got a little way into the village, I saw them first unbutton the flaps of their pouches, and immediately afterwards load. I now called my men to attention, in this case little more than a formality, for they saw the thundercloud blackening as plainly as I did, and had silently and instinctively fallen into their places. I suppose that there was something in my eye and manner, as I turned round and gave the word, that told them that there was to be no nonsense allowed,

for I perceived grim and significant smiles interchanged among them,—a great comfort to me, for it showed me that I had them well in hand. I now ordered a sub-division about thirty yards to the front, so as, in case of any attempt to stop us by upsetting cars on the road, as was a favourite trick of the patriots of the day, to be at hand to remove them, closed my carts up into a compact body, and reserving to the last the fixing bayonets and loading, in the hope that the terror inspired by these ominous preparations might enable us to pull through without fighting—advanced into Clonacrana.

The Saxon reader will probably be inclined to sneer at what he will facetiously call my magnanimous resolution above stated, to perform my duty, be the consequences what they would to myself individually; and the Saxon reader will be wrong, as has been his custom heretofore,

upon such matters. The consequence referred to was not the casualties of war, as he may suppose. Neither I nor, I am convinced, any single man in my detachment shrunk from shot or steel, or entertained the slightest doubt but that if any attempt was made to stop us by any amount of numbers whatever, we should be able and willing to give such an account of any such hostile body as has not been heard since Cromwell's time. What weighed then heavily upon my mind, and I believe upon the mind of every officer employed in Ireland from 1830 to 1840, was the conviction that in case of collision with a treasonable and felonious mob, however temperately he might perform his duty, he would, in case of bloodshed, be sacrificed to the howlings of a party of traitorous and dishonest demagogues, by a government which habitually coquetted with treason, accepted known lies as great political truths,

and bribed implacable enemies of law and order to a temporary quiet; a system the fruits of which England is at this moment reaping. Vainly are we told what they must reap who sow the wind.

It may be said that cases did occur where officers did defend their men's lives and their own without being offered up as victims upon the altar of Celtic humanity; but those officers owe their escape, not to the courage or justice of the government of the day, but to the prudence of O'Connell. He judged their cases and pronounced their acquittal.

As I advanced into the village, I was much struck with the rapid disappearance of the crowd. There were a few men lounging idly about the doors of the cottages; the women of the place had all turned out and scowled at us like so many she-devils with toothaches; at the further end of the village was a knot of thirty or

forty men, collected round a few country carts (I was thoroughly wide awake to what that imported), but the crowd that a few minutes ago I had seen swarming in the squalid street had vanished. Of course I knew they could not be far off, and I then remarked that the men at the carts were collecting women in great numbers about them. Now when an Irish mob puts the women in front it is a premonitory symptom that it is going to attack. They trust in some degree to the gallantry of the soldiers not firing into women, and at all events they prefer that the women should be shot than themselves; and it is not so difficult an operation as might be supposed, for women have not the same instinctive horror of fire-arms as men; they see the lance and the bayonet, they see the blow falling, but they do not see the ball coming, and as to the chance of being shot they *will* not believe (as in many other cases) that

such a thing can happen, until it has happened.

This then was my agreeable position. I knew that I was immediately to be attacked in front. I knew that on either flank some two or three thousand men waited only the proper moment to open a fire on me from the cottages, or to pitch in a volley of stones as big as one's fist from the gardens behind them, or both—and it turned out to be both. I knew this as perfectly then as I did a quarter of an hour afterwards, when it had happened and all was over, and yet the most simple military precaution—viz., the dislodging the ambushed assailants from the rear of the cottages, which could have been done and certainly with success, was not to be thought of. It would have been a felony; to be tried very likely by a jury composed in part of my assailants, as was actually the case with the coroner's inquest which returned a verdict of wilful murder

against the officers and men of the 120th regiment of foot collectively, which verdict has not, I believe, been set aside to this day; though as neither the county coroner nor any other magistrate has yet thought fit to issue his warrant for the apprehension of the 120th, we are yet unchanged; for which we are indebted to O'Connell, who said, that executing a regiment of infantry, or that sort of thing, would not do quite yet, but offered to lay his head upon the block if it was not practicable next June.

I was now half way through the village, wondering why the game had not begun already. I now, without halting, loaded, fixed bayonets, and with the sub-division in advance I have already spoken of, made a dash at the carts. I was in time. Before they could be got into motion my men had seized them, every man about them immediately catching a woman in his arms, whom he employed as a target, and for a

moment I deluded myself into a belief that I had been too quick for the fine pisintry, and that I should slip through; in fact, the certainty that five minutes more would produce that result, brought on a general attack. The street in my front and rear was thronged in a second; volleys of stones came pouring on us from behind the houses, and a young man, apparently a respectable farmer's son, rashly leaving the shelter of the cabins, came up to a sergeant, and actually snapped a pistol in his face.

The pistol burned priming, and the sergeant shot the man dead, an irregular fire broke out all round; I think the mob must have fired as many as thirty or forty shots, but the chatter of the regular musketry was a good deal too sharp for the amateur splutterers, and it soon had all the talk to itself. The convoy had now halted, for all this passed, as may be supposed, in a very few minutes, and in not very many more

we were clear of the village. I saw some bodies lying about, dead and wounded, but did not attempt to make prisoners, having enough to do with removing my own wounded, amounting to an officer and four men. The officer, I regret to say, was Johnny.

I could, however, plainly perceive that my days' work was by no means over yet. The mob that had actually attacked me had, indeed, scattered in all directions, but still, once out of reach of shot, had got into a number of little groups who evidently were taking the direction of some prearranged place of rendezvous; and, after a few minutes consideration of the nature of the road, with which, having only passed over it so short a time before, I was well acquainted, I entertained no sort of doubt but that I should have the pleasure of renewing the acquaintance of my kind friends at the pass of Knockuiske. As

to the professional debate likely to occur there, I had not the slightest anxiety *now* the murderous attack upon me had untied my hands, and given a charming legality to the whispering of ball cartridge. I felt that I had an unquestionable right to act as if I were in an enemy's country, and was not unwilling to exercise it.

Exactly as I had expected, I found the pass occupied in great force; it was a sort of ravine, in fact, a cleft through a mountain, by adopting which the road saved several miles of detour, and its sides were much too steep to attack, with any prospect of success, a really well concealed ambuscade. A well managed surprise here might, to troops marching carelessly, have been productive of serious results; but the extraordinary and most extravagant genius of the Celt never showed itself to greater advantage than upon this occasion; never did I see more deliciously developed that

strange mixture of cunning and simplicity, that shows so clearly that the Celtic mind is in its child stage, and ought to be treated accordingly.

They had made their preparations with great rapidity and some skill. They had upset several cars across the road, and were busy digging a trench, which, though nothing to stop men or horses, would have been a serious obstacle to loaded cars, especially as they were loaded with a commodity that might not be very patient under jolting. They had piled heaps of stones, about sixty or seventy feet up the slopes, for pelting, and in some places had placed what were positively rocks, in positions whence they might conveniently be rolled down upon us, and there must have been some thousands of them on the spot, covering the sides of the hill, shouting, cursing, and defying us; and thus—after our combat in Clonacrana had effectually

relieved me from the necessity of treating them with any sort of ceremony, having thus set their trap, in broad daylight, in full view of myself and my men—thus did these heavenly innocents, in the beautiful simplicity of their young hearts, imagine that I was going to walk right into it.

“Och, the jewels!” I heard one of my men say to another, “it’s a broth of a boy that’s lading them blackguards; it’s counting their chickens before they’re hatched, they are, if they think the captain’s such a born innocent as to stand that dodge.”

“They want some more lessons of Brown Bess’s taching,” returned the other, looking at his flint, and, notwithstanding his Irish brogue, falling into his place with military unconcern, as I gave the word to march at attention. When within about four yards of the good Christians on the hill, I halted the convoy, closed up everything into a compact body, and leaving orders for it not

to advance till I sounded the advance from the front, took a company with me and proceeded to what I suppose was an operation that formed no part of the philosophy of those worthy children of nature—viz. the turning their position.

The upper part of the mountain, which the narrow gorge of Knockuiske pierced at this spot, was to my right hand, and, of course, as the possession of the upper ground implied that of the lower, I took ground about a hundred yards to my right, and extending one sub-division and supporting with the other, advanced in skirmishing order. I immediately perceived this produced some effect; the crowd began slowly to melt away, but the number of those who judged it discreet to increase the distance between their own persons and the muzzles of my firelocks was by no means so many as might have been expected. The mode of governing Ireland of late years had made

it so completely a matter of faith with the country-people that the troops were mere playthings — nine-pins for them to bowl down—that, though aware that when in any very imminent peril of our lives we sometimes defended ourselves, sometimes even in a manner unpleasant to our assailants, still the great bulk of the crowd could not realize in their own minds the idea of our *originating* a fire of our own accord; and there they stood, I believe, without any very serious idea of resisting us if we really attacked in earnest, but observing our movements with a deal of good-natured curiosity, for they were now getting more silent, and, from their gestures, seeming to divide their interest between the halted convoy in the road and the company with which I was rapidly advancing along the field, without in the least appearing to consider that a few minutes more *must* send a storm of shot whistling among them.

A good number of them certainly dropped off on the side that I was approaching, probably old soldiers, who could spell the portentous characters that are composed of sub-divisions and sections, and knew that the movement I was making would compel me to open a fire in a few minutes; but still the right-hand slope was crowded with a multitude that *must* be dispersed, and, on the other side of the road, our transactions seemed to be looked upon by the patriotic spectators on that slope as an interesting drama by no means concerning them. I did not wish to kill more than I could help, and, therefore, in the hopes that they would take the hint, I commenced serious operations at a considerable distance, and was barely within range when I ordered the "Fire" to be sounded.

It may be necessary to explain that troops firing in skirmishing, fire by alternate ranks. Now, as the company I had with

me consisted of sixty men, of whom one half was extended skirmishing, and the other kept together in support, it is obvious that their outbreak of fire must have consisted of fifteen shots. Fifteen hundred 48-pounders, however, could not have performed the service more effectually. The scamper that instantaneously took place can be compared to nothing but rabbits surprised and plunging into their burrows and, indeed, resembled that scene of little dignity in no slight degree; for they went tumbling and blundering over one another in their hurry, in such a manner, that if I had not known that such a fire, at such a distance, *could* have produced hardly any results, I should have supposed that some awful slaughter had taken place. I never saw such a number of coat-tails together in my life before or since.

Not one, I believe, was touched, at least they left no wounded behind, and we per-

ceived no marks of blood when we took possession of the ground they had stood upon, and I hope they all got safe home. When the ramrods of the rank that had fired were heard working in the barrels, the other rank, as is the regular mode of proceeding, delivered its fire, and the yell that burst from the crowd was tremendous. The second volley is always a staggerer; it suggests to every man's mind the homely proverb, "There's more where that came from," as they generally have had enough and to spare already; and the smoke had not curled away and melted into nothingness ere the crowd had done the same.

That on the other slope, sensibly diminished indeed, still lingered, in the vain hope of being considered as innocent spectators, but perceiving that though I had ceased firing for the moment, I was by no means inclined to consider them in that amiable light, for I was bringing up my

right shoulders to present a front to them with a similar fringe of fire, they also evaporated, and the pass of Knockuiske will not figure in the history of the Irish Republic as an Hibernian Morat. I now sounded the advance for the convoy, for there was not a martyr in sight, and leaving my skirmishers extended, as a gentle hint in case of reviving patriotism, I descended into the road with the support, and soon made a practicable passage for my convoy.

I reached the barracks in safety, and was exceedingly glad when I had delivered up my charge and made my report, which I took care should be as favourable to myself as was consistent with credibility, an effort in which I was much assisted by the agreeable circumstance that no one on the adverse side could contradict me, on the English side of the water, without confessing to a felony. I believe the general opinion in Ireland was, that I ought to be

CHAPTER XII.

THE WOUND AND THE WOUNDED—THE STRAW THAT
SHOWS THE WIND—THE WAY OF ONE'S OWN—
THE LURE OF THE MIRROR—THE SHADOW OF THE
SPECTRE.

Of that inquest I shall here say nothing. The absence of all authority on the part of the coroner, of all fairness on the part of the jury, and of all truth on the part of the witnesses, were striking characteristics of that singular assemblage, at least to a Saxon eye. But little promise of aptitude for self-government displayed itself there. However, it launched its bolt, and, as it is said of other bolts of a similar character, it was soon sped. May it rest in peace! The

affair of Knockuiske, however, necessarily detained me for some time in Ballymac-crocodile. I might have been wanted to answer questions, or to be hanged, or something of the sort. Perhaps it was considered fair-play, that some of the boys whose uncles or aunts had been shot at either of the places of combat, should have a shot at me in return, from behind a hedge. There I was, as I say, in case I was wanted. I was not; so here I am.

The soldier commonly has a certain immunity in Ireland; he has no hayricks to burn, and no cattle to hough. The attempt to turn up the surface of the barrack-yard might lead to turning up the toes of the turner; and the attempt to burn the dwelling of the soldier might be found marked by a disagreeable peculiarity, viz., that the first outbreak of fire might be accompanied by an alarming amount of lead. One thing, however, gave me great pleasure.

Almost immediately after our return, Mrs. O'Reilly, hearing that something particular had happened, came up to see what it was, and finding that Johnny was wounded, insisted upon forthwith removing him to the parsonage, to which O'Flaherty, being a high disciplinarian, at first demurred, but upon my urging the sanative effects of female attendance upon wounded men, yielded with a semifossilised sigh, and an antediluvian sentiment about a senora with black eyes, and black hair, and black mantilla, and I do not know how much more black about her, who had tended him a quarter of a century ago, when he got a dab of French lead before St. Sebastian.

I have no doubt the senora is now as old and ugly as sin, and a great deal uglier; but I could almost have kissed her for the share her memory (or recollection, if she still survive) had in procuring Johnny permission to pass his days of illness in a

Christian home, instead of the devil's pig-stye, in which our rulers pen the British army, under the name of barracks. Johnny accordingly was conveyed to the parsonage, and our surgeon went down to see what was the matter, and patch him up as well as possible.

The wound was serious, though I believe not dangerous; at least Grampus described it at mess that evening as a polygonal incision of the left-branchial artery, with radiated labial apertures, and a molluscous contusion of the superincumbent stratum of cellular tissue; together with an exfoliatory erasure of the ossa, and erosion of the cuticle. I may mention, for the benefit of my non-medical readers, that the boy was really shot in the arm, and grazed in the ribs,---a wound, of course, troublesome, but nothing particular; but I was very glad to get him down to the parsonage. I was convinced that he would get better much faster there than

amidst the ceaseless sound of a soldier's life, to say nothing of female influence. I am convinced that, were I ever wounded, which the Lord forbid, the difference between the grim visage of my soldier servant and the interesting and sympathizing countenance of such a charming creature as Ellen O'Reilly would make a difference of eight or ten days at least in my convalescence. I should be absorbed in the blue eyes whilst the pill was slipping down my throat, and the taper fingers would shed a light upon the blackest draught; but I am not quite certain that I should be in any great hurry about confessing to convalescence.

In spite of the hard words our warlike Galen applied to his case, Johnny, to all appearance, got gradually better; Ellen attended him with a motherly interest, by which she acquired such an influence over him as to compel him to swallow whatever diabolical messes Grampus chose to drench

him with, which I am convinced he never would have done upon any other terms; and little Nanny, with a precocious gravity, enacted the part of nurse. She wore out her best sash in the performance, for she never would go near him without being decked out to the full amount that her limited finery admitted of; and I caught her once settling her hair into some particular fashion that he fancied, when she was going to take him in a cup of some abominable vegetable tea that he was ordered to drink.

I gave her a coral necklace that evening, which drove her wild with joy; she declared I was quite a satellite, by which I understood her to mean something starlike, or planetary, or heavenly; at all events, something of a superior sphere; and it would but have been decorous in a clergyman's daughter to have called me an angel, or a cherub, as I have no doubt she *felt* me

to be at that moment. I think she slept in that necklace for some time; I do not think she does now, or it would not be in such good preservation,—for I saw it the other day, at the head of the table of a particular friend of mine, and she told me, while I was helping the Brunoise, that she had a diamond set and an emerald set now, but she had a sort of liking for the coral still. She did not mean that to be by way of making love to me, as a young lady sitting within two of me thought, and said to her next neighbour in French, supposing that I was not likely to understand that recondite language; I knew that she did not, but it pleased me nevertheless.

Some time after our little affair with the aborigines, it was considered that I had been kept at Ballymacrocodile to be cross-examined or shot at long enough, and I got a few days leave to go and see Hawkins at Dunmanway. I had been so long in the

habit of doing incomprehensible things, that my wanting to leave the domestic enjoyments of the 120th, and plunge into the unknown regions of the county Cork, excited no surprise. I believe if I had chosen to roost in a horse chesnut tree, or reside in the church steeple, our people would have simply remarked, "It's so like Cobb," and there would have been an end of it. It saves one an amazing deal of trouble, being allowed to do things "so like" oneself. Half the worry of life lies in the attempt to do things like others, who are commonly very indifferent models. Nobody troubled his head about what I wanted at Dunmanway; but if the twelve Apostles had declared that I was going there for the purpose of reconciling a faithless lover to a lovesick girl, not a soul in the regiment would have believed it. Probably, if the supposition had been started, an amendment would have been brought forward and

unanimously adopted, to the effect that I was gone to persuade Hawkins to assign me any remaining interest he might have reserved in the young lady, or something of that sort.

The day before I started I went to dine at the parsonage. One would have supposed, that considering Mrs. O'Reilly was quite aware *why* I was going to visit my instant friend, a quiet family dinner would have been the most rational way of entertaining me, and perhaps a confidential bit of chat after; but that incomprehensible spirit that is everlastingly whispering into woman's ears; tempted her to ask Mary Anne O'Malley, who watches everything like a cat, and whom I hated like poison. Whether Ellen was cognisant of the real object of my journey or not, I do not know, but she was dressed in something very like half-mourning, had abolished her ringlets, and looked the very impersonation of hopeless misery,

as I told Hawkins the next evening over our whisky punch. Mary Anne O'Malley, on the contrary, showed great spirit; she took possession of Johnny to Nanny's intense disgust, and evidently all dinner time was pitching something uncommonly hot and strong and sweet into him; so much so, that when an opportunity occurred, I thought it my duty to Edith to call him over the coals for it.

"Johnny, my boy," said I, when the ladies had left the room and our minds were at ease, "you are taking to flirting, now that you've got your arm in a sling, you interesting young reprobate; what's that long conversation you've been holding with Mary Anne O'Malley all dinner time?"

"I wasn't holding any," said he; "she's been talking to me all the time, telling me what sort of a person she'd like for a husband, if ever she could make up her mind to marry, which, of course, she never would."

"Oh, the blessed Saint Virgin and Martyr!" said I; "she abjures matrimony, does she? Well, what's her idea of the coming man?"

"Why," said Johnny, "he must be young, of good family, at least by the mother's side at all events, and he must have been in the army; she does not care about much money, she says."

"No, of course not," said I; "she'd take it out in love."

"Yes," replied he, "she says better a dinner of herbs—"

"Don't be blasphemous, Johnny," said I, "she's been coming the religious dodge over you; what did she say about her man,—what was he to be like?"

"Oh, about middle size," returned Johnny, with great simplicity; "rather pale and interesting looking; and she laid great stress upon good teeth."

"Light hair," suggested I.

"Yes, she said she liked light hair, it was so angelic."

"But not blue eyes," said I; "she liked brown eyes."

"How the devil do you know that?" asked Johnny, opening *his* brown eyes very wide indeed.

"And a complexion with the mark of the sun's kisses on it," said I.

Johnny sat staring on me.

"Small feet?"

Johnny looked at his French polish, they were very small.

"And a bit of a poet," said I; "soul for music—eh?"

"Well, she said something about that," said Johnny; "but how do you know that?"

"Why, Johnny, you heavenly innocent," said I; "she has been describing you to yourself as her own ideal: that's the way women propose; and if you don't look

sharp, she'll just trip you up and carry you off as a sparrow-hawk does a water-wagtail. I'll tell you what, Johnny; I'll write to Clementina Mullins, to say you are deceiving her."

"She deceived me seven times herself since we left Dublin," returned Johnny, with an air of injured innocence; "first of all, there was the flirtation with that confounded huzzar: then she took up with a captain of Horse Artillery, that's two: there was Brandyball, because he kept a drag, that's three: and then that little fool in the Rifles, that curled his hair, that's four."

"Where did you get all this fashionable news, Johnny?" interrupted I. "Johnny, my boy, you're getting scandalous."

"I got it from Hope," said Johnny, with an odd twist of his head, and a curious expression of uneasiness in his countenance, which at once rivetted my attention. I

had seen something of the sort before, but I could not recollect where or how.

"What is the matter with you?" asked I.

"Only a little stiffness in the back of my neck," replied he, swallowing a glass of wine with a face as if it were physic.

"I think our young friend has caught cold," said Mr. O'Reilly.

"I think I have," answered Johnny; "for I've got an odd sort of sore-throat, too. I must have some whey to-night, and I dare say I shall be all right in the morning."

Soon after this we adjourned to the drawing-room, where Mary Anne O'Malley renewed her attack upon Johnny, who received her advances much as French infantry in square receive Cossacks. What she wanted with him I never could make out; she could not have expected him to marry *her*, and if she did, she went the wrong way about it, for she speedily created

a positive aversion to her in his breast. This evening he was evidently out of sorts, and I was not sorry to see him packed off to bed about half-past nine; he complained of his throat, and of an odd feeling about the root of his tongue, but at the time I was not aware that this portended anything more than a common cold; and after a short and mutually interesting conversation with Ellen about the crops and fine weather, and the widow O'Something or Other, the subjects that so completely absorbed both our minds at the moment, took my leave, receiving at parting that spasmodic grasp from Ellen, which used to give me so much pain. I little thought that there was a much worse spasm than that in the house that moment.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MORNING AND THE GLEAM OF LIGHT—THE
RETRIBUTION IN THE TOWER—THE MONSTER
MEETING—THE NATIONAL LYRIC—THE CHILD
OF THE NATIVE—THE STRANGER IN THE TONGUE.

AWAY in the clear bright morning for Dunmanway, with a sort of sensation that I was about to do a good action—a sensation strange and unaccustomed to me, and I believe something like that which pervades a young couple upon the birth of their first child. I suppose it wears out by much use, but I have no doubt that it is an agreeable excitement at first, the calling an immortal soul into existence. I have felt the same sort of thing before, when I was

very young, in spring; I wonder, will it ever come again—at least, on this side of the grave!

Away I rattled in royal humour; there was not a pig that I did not touch up as I passed him; there was not a dog whose bark did not turn to a yelp as he came within range; and I think I must have winked at Mrs. O'Halloran's fat lady's maid, as I spun by her, tripping demurely to mass, she cast down her great eyes so sheepishly, and shot them up so like bluish lightning. It was a fine, bracing, invigorating morning; all the Ballymacrocodilites were afoot, leaning over the half-doors of their cabins, and I almost fancied that two or three of them were half thinking of going to work somewhere or other at something or other. I wish they had; there was not a rood of ground, street, or road within twenty miles where there was not something out of repair; if they had only

mended their own inexpressibles, it would have added to the civilization of the scene.

Away, over the long dreary bog, with its deep holes, the armouries of the fine peasantry, where they conceal the musket and the fowling-piece, which are to win them their "rights" at their great day of Armageddon — that, like the rainbow, seems always near, but always receding—the waste black bog, with the grey, tall, lonely tower that the English settler built in days of yore, with its peaked roof and its little corkscrew stair in the corner, and its strange little nooks, in which heart of steel and peep-of-day boy have lurked, and the "man on his keeping" has crouched into himself, and held his breath as he heard the police searching, and half felt the gripe of the hangman on his throat, as the carbines struck against the walls. What a deep breath drew he as their measured tread died away in the distance, yet no

thought of his victim came to that man's mind,—no thought of the grey hair bedabbled with blood, and the pale girl trying to stanch it, and deluding herself into the thought she had succeeded, because it had ceased to flow. Many are the towers like that in Ireland, built by the armed intruder, to shelter the armed murderer of his successor — perhaps descendant—the Nemesis of stone and mortar.

Away through the villages of curs and dunghills, and through that beautiful city called Cork, renowned mostly for beef and beggars, with its giantie harbour and unrivalled natural advantages—(what a place Cork would be if you could only expunge the Corkomans and transplant the population of Liverpool to the spot!)—on through Bandon, close to which, according to the Irish historians, Cesara, Noah's niece, pitched her tent soon after the deluge, and planted a potato garden, now called Kill-

brogan ; and at last I reached Dunmanway.

I found Hawkins and most of his detachment away. There was a monster meeting held in the neighbourhood, I believe, to petition for a repeal of the duties on window glass, which the fine peasantry found so burdensome; or the abolition of judges and juries; or an act for the better ventilation of madhouses; or some other of their rights, I never could precisely make out what. However, Hawkins was there with a party, and I determined to follow, and see what this great popular demonstration was like. I had, as the reader is aware, had some professional intercourse with such mobs already, but had never before mingled with one as a civilian. I had, however, formed my opinion of their composition, which a nearer acquaintance by no means tended to dispel.

The scene was a strange one, worthy of


the strange and unintelligible land on which it was enacted, an enormous body of willing dupes in frieze coats and indifferent hats, swallowing open-mouthed huge doses of irresistibly ludicrous treason, facetious ferocity, and comic patriotism. The Great Man was there as leader, himself and his leadership an embodied anomaly; for no man believed a word he spoke, yet his word was law to all his followers,—gospel to some,—yet these very men followed him almost as much in the sense in which hounds follow the hare, not their huntsman. There was a whole caravan of country cars, a few jaunting cars, a barouche for the leading patriots, a shifting here and there, groups gathering, scattering, whispering, shouting, massing, circling, but ever closing upon a common centre, with a choral undergrowl of “Repale.”

With respect to the formal proceedings of the meeting itself, I shall say nothing,

for indeed I know very little, and care less. I believe they were composed of the regular stock materials,—cunning, that traded upon the dishonest credulity of roguish dupes; fraudulent cupidity that, under the garb of patriotism, sought to evade the discharge of just obligations; ferocity, faintly veiled by the outward appearance of religious zeal; treason, under the disguise of constitutional formality, lies in the front, butchery in the rear,—the wolf reproaching the lamb with troubling the water. It is well for us, the mere minstrels of history, that we can saddle our ponderous brethren with the dirty work. To them we can leave the festering mass, and willingly we do so; but there was one group here that particularly attracted my notice, and I shall endeavour to describe its proceedings.

The principal personage in this section of the assembly was a young man, tall, very powerfully built, and, as far as mere animal

features went, remarkably handsome, the puppy; but the expression of his countenance was at that moment much marred by a peculiar glance of the eye, half-threat, half-wariness, savage bullying dashed with low cunning, that often animates the countenance of a boy in a dispute with another, when the debate arrives at the menacing point of—"Say that again." The gentleman in question was at this moment standing on a jaunting-car, with a grim smile that might truly be called a speaking smile; for it said, "Tyrants, tremble!" as plainly as if the words had been articulated, surveying the scene that was passing round him. His coat was green—his waistcoat green—his trousers green—his white hat was surrounded with black crape; in mourning, I suppose, for the woes of his country, the treaty of Limerick, or the last of the Druids; his buttons bore the loyal emblem of the harp, without the crown, whereby it



is intended, *more hibernico*, to convey to the public mind that her Majesty is Queen of Ireland, as an integral nation—not as a portion of the United Kingdom. He bore a stick of fearful dimensions—not the national arm, the handy little shillelagh—but a positive club of a murderous ponderosity, and he was awaiting, with an aspect, which, I believe, he intended should represent a fiery patience, the termination of the rapturous applause which greeted the subjoined national hymn, a well-meant air, which I purchased on the spot for a penny, and do not hesitate to say that I think it was worth the money.

“ Remember the hour, boys,
Before yez were born,
Ere Protestant power, boys,
Your green flag had torn ;
When kings' crowns, and half-crowns,
Was plentiful things ;
The law coorts were kings' coorts,
For all men were kings.

" Then great Olla Folla,
Not the laste supercilious,
Bate Solomon hollow,
And Numa Pompilius.
The geese were all swans, then,
The pratie pots gold:
Without lave or consent,
We thrashed young and old.

" We argued with black thorns,
Discoorsing with blows;
Who came second best off,
Got a bloody nose.
The strongest was richest,
The weakest fared worst,
And he that was bouldest,
Was always served first.

" We all had our rights, then;
We now have our wrongs;
The devil's delights, then,
We'll kick up at once.
Whisk your switches away, boys,
For each Saxon marauder,
We'll slate ould De Grey, boys,
And we'll card the Recorder.

"You won't hear yourself spake, boys,
For the roar for repale,
The fierce cowards shall quake, boys,
From their head to their tail,
The truculent caltiffs
Shall turn bloody pale,
The miscreants shall warble,
Hurrah for Repale!"

"Well, Mr. Lancaster," said young Ireland, as the bard concluded, and the applause subsided, "what do you think of that? is not that the voice of a nation of loving brothers warbling in social unison the accents of everlasting, unextinguishable hate?"

The gentleman whom he addressed seemed to be about his own age, and was also fearfully and wonderfully attired; he, too, wore a long green frock coat without a collar, a deficiency which, however, his shirt abundantly supplied, for its collar almost covered his shoulders, its gills would have done for a whale; but with the verdant hue of his upper garment, the har-

mony of his attire with the Hibernicism of the present occasion ceased and determined; a brilliant sky-blue waistcoat surmounted a pair of trousers of the most cyclopean pattern of tartan I ever set eyes on, and his head, whence long locks depended to the place where the collar of his coat would have been had it had a local habitation, was surrounded by a sky-blue forage cap with a white band, his face presenting the somewhat (to English eyes) anomalous conjunction of enormous long moustaches and immense round spectacles with a dash of violet in them.

Upon this appeal he smoothed down his shirt collar, adjusted his spectacles, twisted his moustache, assumed a metaphysical air, and answered in such language as never man or beast heard before, and that set me staring open-mouthed at him for the next half hour. His extraordinary answer requires the place of honour of the head of a chapter, to which we will remit it.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BLACK CLOUD OF WORDS—THE NEW WORLD AND
THE OLD—HERO WORSHIP—THE PEEP BEHIND
THE SCENES.

“Of a truth,” said this mighty man of words, “I do, as it were, dimly, auricularly perceive in the many-tongued oneness of the sound storm, the obscure interwoven ground tone of a great soul concert, harmoniously dissonant.”

“Heart broken Eirinn, with her lovely head discrowned, meekly bewailing her unutterable woes,” said the young Irishman, who was the cynosure of neighbouring eyes, and whom I subsequently discovered to be a respectable linen-draper, of Scotch origin,

called Walker; "heart broken Eirinn, calling on the shades of her kings and druids, and hear how the sacred soil of Carrickarafferty echoes back its native tones."

" I do inwardly conceive, was the answer, that the sacred and mysterious union of the higher notes of song with the groundmight of the base which the voice of the people supplies, twin-born and immortally wedded from the moment of their common birth, may, on its own native ground, connect organisms with matter to a mind-land-communion, which the sons of the soil perceive to be heart-stirring, but which can never ring out natural and con-cording music to aspirations born in another time, clime, and place, nor harmonize with that tone of mind to which they should form a conturbing orchestral accompaniment in its creative mood. Whence I do not myself, inward-soul-woven-configure the race-belonging rythm therein working."

"Phelim," I heard a respectable-looking, elderly farmer say, who had been listening almost as open mouthed as myself to the learned discourse—"what's that he's saying at all, at all? is it gibberish?"

"Gibberish!" returned Phelim, in high contempt; "then Mike, jewel, where have you been living all your life? sure it's Saxon he's talking."

"Saxon!" replied the other; "so that's Saxon, is it? raal Saxon? Well, anyhow it's some comfort to know what it is that we've been cursing and swearing at this three years and more, but the Saxons themselves wouldn't marry their twins, as he says."

"Wouldn't they?" said the other; "you don't know what they wouldn't do; faith, robbing a church wouldn't stick in their gizzards, I'll engage. Sure they marry their priests and bishops, why wouldn't they marry their brothers and sisters too, twins itself!"

"Mighty hard names he calls everything," said Mike.

"Faith you may say that," replied Phelim, "it's bad language he uses."

"D—d bad language," returned Mike. "I'm thinking he hasn't got the use of his tongue properly; what the blazes does he wear those blue goggles for?"

"For fear the boys should throw dirt in his eyes," replied the other, with peculiar wink, and immediately afterwards he approached more nearly to Mr. Lancaster, who was anxiously awaiting another burst of eloquence from the orator of the jaunting-car. Out it came, hot and hot.

"What are we here for? ("To petition Parliament," suggested a cautious-looking attorney who was standing near him.) To petition Parliament?—as soon petition that parliament whose Speaker is—

"Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice and parents' tears;
Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons!"

"If we go on petitioning the accursed, unnatural, stock-jobbing, poor-starving, pot-walloping, heretic English Parliament, where will Ireland be among the nations? America will indict her as a swindler. It was not for that that your brave countrymen assembled in hundreds of thousands on the hill of Tara, and hailed your leader in voices of thunder in the Rath of Mullaghmast, when the wrath of smiling Eirinn, long pent up and nursed in the bosom of her patience, shall burst forth unappeasably to the light, like a cataract on fire, when the blazing breath of Freedom sweeps, like a young hurricane, over a land bursting with patriotism, uprooting in its beneficent violence the coronets and mitres of a detested brood of aliens and heretics, and assassins and butchers; when once more the Gaelic Brehon, the lineal heir and successor to that Brehon that sacked Rome, shall throw the sword into the scale with

the terrible word, 'Woe to the conquered!' when the oppressor, fattened with the blood and the tears of centuries, shrinking before his withering glance, shall bethink himself of the prudent course adopted by his brother snakes in the days of St. Patrick, and rush madly into suicide to save himself from slaughter; when the world's foundations tremble, and the bond that unites the quivering granite to the quaking whinstone—"

What catastrophe was to happen then I cannot tell, because I do not know. The foundations of the world have not settled an inch, that I know of, and the granite and the whinstone are pretty good securities to this day, but the belly-band of an Irish jaunting-car is not, and at this tremendous moment it gave way. Up went the shafts into the air, and, as a necessary corollary, down went the orator to the ground, his parent soil treating him in a most step-

motherly coldness, encasing him in a garment of well-trodden and curiously-compounded mud; upon arising from which the shouts of laughter with which he was received told him most unmistakably that his oratory for that great day for Ireland was over. It is well for a speaker when his audience laugh *with* him, but an unerring instinct evidently warned Mr. Walker, who seemed by no means deficient in acuteness, that no man can safely address an audience that has once laughed at him.

I was very sorry for this *contretemps*; I wanted to hear him hold forth about the sunrise in the west, and other wild flowers of Irish oratory, and I found out subsequently that he was considered one of their best and most national orators, and one of the principal pillars of the State that is to be when the Saxon is mowed down and made hay of. Whilst he was being mopped, brushed, scrubbed, dabbed, and otherwise

purified, I observed my friend Phelim approach the remarkable Lancaster, and for some time listen very attentively to his discourse, at the same time carefully scrutinising his attire, a personal examination which, in the end, seemed to lead him to a conclusion respecting the country of that gentleman different from that with which he had started, and he forthwith communicated his new opinion to his next door neighbour, who was evidently very much struck with it.

The idea seemed to take; little knots of men were immediately formed in every direction, discoursing eagerly upon some very interesting subject. As the conversation was carried on in Irish, I could not make out what they were saying, but the subject clearly was Mr. Lancaster, as I saw from the eager flashing eyes that were bent upon him. He did not observe them himself, probably would not have

heeded them if he had, for he did not look like one who was in the habit of troubling his head much about the safety of his person; but his companion immediately became aware of the notice he was attracting, and was very uneasy about it, for he evidently felt that it was perfectly possible that an excited mob, taking him for a spy, might proceed to acts of violence.

I think he must have heard the allegation that he was a Saxon, and, I suppose, having brought him into his present position, felt himself responsible for his personal safety, which he proposed providing for, by turning public attention into another direction, and so getting the best chance of withdrawing his endangered guest quietly. I saw him persuade one of the regular hack-paid declaimers to address the people; and the patriot, having got upon a turf-cut reversed, began:—

“Brethren—The cause, the holy cause—

the cause of the fatherless and the widow !
the cause of the stranger and the oppressed !”
(I thought he was now going to get out of
his causes, but I remarked that the excitement of the mob, with respect to Mr. Lancaster, was fast coming to a crisis,) “for which we are met this day, is to shake from our shoulders the bonds of slavery and the curse of an alien legislature.”

“Hurrah for the Union !” burst suddenly from a group of frieze coats. The orator looked disconcerted, but proceeded—“The curse of a legislative union—”

“The Union for ever !” shouted the people.

The orator was thunderstruck, but the clamour still continued—“Hurrah for the Union—the Union for ever—more power to its elbow !”

““Hereditary bondsmen !”” roared the patriot, in high disdain, not unmixed with

trepidation—" ' Hereditary bondsmen ! ' "—
but the watchword fell unheeded.

Three cheers for the stripes was the
answer.

" The stars and stripes," suggested some
one—"

" Say the moon at once, ye lunatics ! "
howled the orator, at his wits' end.

" Hurrah for America ! " shouted the
mob; and with a rush and a roar they
pounced upon the bewildered Lancaster,
who, before he could form the slightest idea
of what was going on, found himself perched
upon the shoulders of an huzzaing crowd,
and, representing in his own person the
United States of North America, progress-
ing rapidly towards the hustings, whence
the great man in green was at that moment
delivering a most inflammatory speech.

Never was greatness so unexpectedly
thrust upon unwitting mortal. It was in

vain that he protested that he was a true-born Englishman, and had served many years in the army of his country.

"An Englishman," said they; "mighty fine that; it's senator Lancaster, from New York—sure he's been talking American the last two hours. How would you know a man if it wasn't for his tongue. Three cheers for General Lancaster. He says he sympathizes, too. Never mind, sir, we won't sell you to the Peelers; never fear. Hurrah for the American people and language; what for would they be tied to English words. Freeborn Yankees like them—"

"My friends," gasped the unhappy victim, spasmodically.

"His friends!" responded the many-headed and more-tongued. "He's a Quaker from Pennsylvania."

"Why don't you pay your debts?" roared a repudiated.

"Whisht, you blackguard!" yelled a true patriot; "isn't the gentleman come to help us against the miscreants? what for would he pay them? Sure it's the Saxons that lent the money, not us; and it's over there now, in case we go over the water."

But when was Fortune otherwise than fickle. When the worthy Lancaster, amidst thundering cheers, arrived at the hustings, he found that he might say with Wolsey,—

"I have touched the highest point of all my greatness,
And from that full meridian of my glory
I haste now to my setting. I shall fall
Like a bright exhalation in the evening;
And no man see me more."

For scarcely had he reached the tribune, when the Liberator overwhelmed him with a perfect torrent of abuse, the most eloquently foul-mouthed, oratorically vituperative that could be conceived; the fact being, that the introduction of foreign

armed interference in matters of domestic policy might be a very pretty plaything for a dozen unknown pacificators among the mob, but was manifestly no joke to the known, marked, and watched promoter of this assemblage, who, having been all his life endeavouring (it must be admitted with unexampled success) to ascertain how much treason a man might commit without being hanged, was perfectly aware that it might be run too fine, whence unpleasant consequences might ensue; and hence the vials of wrath of the Liberator descended like a vitriolic shower-bath upon the devoted head of the bewildered stranger, to whom his sudden elevation, and no less sudden decadence, were alike utterly incomprehensible, unless upon the ground which had already, I have no doubt, more than once suggested itself to him that there were certain peculiarities in the national mind which would have led—were

it not for the peculiar-minded gentleman being in an overwhelming majority—to the erection in Ireland of a considerable number of edifices resembling the hospital dedicated to St. Luke.

However, the moment the Jupiter began to thunder, the patriots who bore the Prometheus on their shoulders “dropped him, as they expressed it in the figurative and poetical language of the nation, “like a hot potato;” and the Celtic hero having secured his Saxon guest’s body, for his mind was still wandering in the realms of conjecture, and persuaded a patriotic carman to postpone his duty to Ireland, to his duty to himself, and take them back to Dunmanway at double the regular fare, they commenced their journey homeward.

Having seen enough of the thing, I requested a seat on the car, which was graciously accorded; and just after clearing the crowd, we overtook two respectable-

looking men, apparently small shopkeepers, walking along in deep consultation. Mr. Walker recognised them as they passed, and offered them a lift also.

"Two head pacificators," said he to me, with a wink, as they prepared to accept his offer.

"Glorious day for Ireland this, Walker," said one of them, as he mounted. "The Saxon will tremble in his blood-stained boots when he hears of Ireland marshalling her armies to crush the invader—(queer pacificators these, thought I to myself.) Thirty thousand—"

"Thirty, man alive!" interrupted the other; "sixty thousand, if there was a man."

"Where were your eyes?" indignantly broke in Walker; "thirty thousand!—sixty thousand! both, at the very least."

"He is right; he estimates the strength of Ireland better than we do," rejoined

Pacificator A; there could not have been less than ninety thousand children of Erin assembled in their native plain this blessed day."

"Ninety thousand," rejoined Pacificator B, "fighting men, without counting aged men past their work, and boys."

"Who might have amounted to at least fifteen thousand more, besides women and children," added Walker. "You see, Captain, what majestic array we can show in the face of Europe."

"I hope you like the country, sir?" said Pacificator B, to the speaker of unknown tongues. "You've seen a great sight to-day."

"I heard, of a truth," returned that gentleman, "a wide-spread, inarticulate, slumberous murmurment—speaking much in its words, and still more in its silences—which will remain seal-stamp impressed on my mind, like a huge phantasmal giant

shadow, reflected from a world-stirring spectral mirror!"

"You're quite right, sir; that's my way of thinking; that's what I say always," returned the Pacificator, who would have seen the strange gentleman in the blackest pool of the Liffy before he would have acknowledged that he did not understand every word that he spoke. "I'm proud to meet a gentleman of your enlightened and comprehensive understanding;" and then turning to his companion, with the characteristic confidence which the lower order of Irish seem to repose instinctively in the English officer, continued the conversation, which had been momentarily interrupted, with his companion, with the most perfect indifference to my presence.

"Well, what's to be done with these meetings?" said he; "what are they for; there's some thousands of boys losing their

day's work; devil a bit of repale ever will they get, and it would be the ruinin' of the country if they did: where would we sell our pigs or our wheat? He wont frecken out the English government; sure they wont resign; devil a sight of a place any of us will see these twenty years to come. What's the game now?"

"I'll tell you what is," returned the other; "the people down in the west are as mad as hatters about the priests and their dues, and these meetins are just to give them something else to think about—that's what it is; sorra the haporth more."

"Whew!" said the other—"is that all. Well, then, why don't they hold them down in the west."

"Sure, if they held them in the west, the boys would see them themselves," was the answer. Where would your hundreds of thousands be then?"

"I see," said the other. "I'm sinsible;

thank you kindly, sir. Here's where we get down. Good morning, sir. If there's any information about the country we can give you, we'll be proud to oblige you."

"Thousand times hearty thanks!" responded that gentleman—"live ye well."

"What does he mane by that?" asked Pacificator A; "it isn't bad lives, he says, we lead."

"Never mind," returned Pacificator B; "it's Saxon for 'long life to your honour;' poor creatures, they haven't got English enough to discoorse with us."

As the car drove off, Lancaster asked of his companion "Whether he had heard what they were saying?"

"Yes," said the other.

"Is there truth in the voice of it?" asked that wonderful worker of English.

"I don't know much about that," returned the Celt, carelessly; "truth is a mighty inconvanient commodity at these

monster meetings; but I don't suppose there's much lying—a man must live somehow.”

“Then this loud, high, deep chorus-clamour, that this life-blood pledge, to die for Ireland, is an empty voice, and not anything else at all, any how!”

“Sure we're all ready to die for Ireland,” returned Walker, loftily; “but in my private opinion” (here he dropped his voice to a whisper) “most of us would a good deal rather live for Ireland, and the jollier the better.”

one collars a difficulty, it melts away; but in this instance I did not find that agreeable result—indeed, I do not think I could have opened my battle in anything like proper form, had he not given me the opening by inquiring about her himself. Of course, on the road I had carefully studied his letter. The indications in it were—discontent with his quarters, his profession, and his mode of life; above all, with himself.

The little ember of love for Ellen, still smouldering, though thinly veiled by the affected interest in how I got on with her, was, of course, the point upon which I relied—the point of the wedge, as one might say. I never saw a man talked into love yet; but a chance dip of his little finger into that liquid madness, and the game begins; a very little gentle pressure, and in he goes, over head and ears. Hawkins was evidently not yet very deep, but, as it

were, sprinkled. Probably, had he known the real depth of the impression he had made upon Ellen's heart, he would have acted very differently. The tender inquiry in his letter as to how six hundred a-year might be got up, seemed to point towards settled weather for the rest of his life—a berth in ordinary in the haven of matrimony.

Hawkins was really a well-disposed sort of man enough, but he wanted stability of purpose; he never thoroughly knew his own mind. I speedily found an illustration of this point in his character. In his letter to me he had expressed weariness of soldiering. Now he was not, in truth, in the least tired of his profession; he was bored at Dunmanway, and he was tormented with a sort of half-hatched passion for Ellen, which, without being strong enough to spur him to action, or even to cheer him with hope, was quite sufficient to prevent his

deriving enjoyment from anything or anybody else, and I am not very certain that he might not have been somewhat troubled by a sort of a conscience he had. Still he would have repented leaving the army for the rest of his life. He was heart and soul a soldier; his detachment was in first-rate order; and if the swarm of Pacificators I saw in the morning had tried a turn of their trade upon him, I have no doubt he would have returned, the compliment, and pacified them in the usual military manner.

"Well, how do you get on here?" I said. "It is a mercy of Providence that time never stops."

"If it did I should try eternity," replied Hawkins; "a bullet goes far, and sends far, and no price would be very high to get out of this place; it is dull beyond anything my experience affords, and I have had a good deal, too. Heigho! this is a weary world."

"I suppose," said I, "that your recrea-

tions are not of a very varied character? I see you have a lough."

"Yes," replied he, sentimentally, "we have a sort of a lake; it does very well for a cat in a bowl, but is not big enough for duck hunts."

"And that bridge, I presume, affords the usual transatlantic matches?" said I.

"Yes," replied he, languidly. "But the stream eddies too much; there is trout in it, however, and my sub and I divide the labour about them—he catches them, and I eat them; but the thing does not do—*post equitem sedet atra cura*."

"Take to studying geometry," suggested I; "it is a fine, exhilarating exercise for the mind (that was the way we always consoled our friends when they were in distress; we always laughed at them, and they speedily came to laugh at themselves; the system sounds ill, but works well). Conic sections are more intellectual than ours,

and *their* triangles have no blood in them."

"I was thinking of astronomy," said he, lighting a cigar; "it's more elevating."

"By the Lord, he wants to have a slap at the moon," thought I. "He'll be writing sonnets soon — *l'affaire va bien*. And I began to recall that symptomatic stanza in "Don Juan:"—

"He thought about himself, and of the earth;
Of man the wonderful, and of the stars,
And how the deuce they ever could have birth;
And then he thought of earthquakes, and of wars;
How many miles the moon might have in girth;
Of air-balloons, and of the many bars
To perfect knowledge of the boundless skies;
And then he thought of Donna Julia's eyes."

"My dear fellow," said I, "a life of solitude does not suit you. You have no taste for study, or any sort of mental exertion; or, indeed, any exertion whatever. You would not like hunting, only that the

hounds find the brains, and the horses do the work, and you enjoy the glory, to say nothing about the excitement; and even then, when you come home, and are thrown upon your own resources, and towards nine o'clock, you'd give heaven and earth for—somebody to make tea for you."

"Many a shaft at random sent,"

(the reader probably knows the rest); and this shot (chance, as I confess it be) hit the bull's eye; what string in his heart it touched, I cannot tell; but I could see by his countenance that it vibrated instantly, and somewhat sharply. Perhaps it reminded him of those happy family meetings at a certain tea-table in Ballymacrocodile; perhaps it suggested to him a phantasmagoric representation of something that might happen—if he behaved himself properly; perhaps he had been drunk over night, and was seedy and serious in consequence. Be

that how it may, I saw with great pleasure, and no small exultation, that the first blow had been well planted; and no man knew better than I the inestimable value of a good start.

"Have you got that canon of courtship," asked I, "that you showed me a couple of years ago?"

"Yes," he answered; "it is in my desk, among the letters."

As he opened the desk where his correspondence reposed, I perceived that it consisted mainly of little delicate notes in little delicate hands. I do not think they were about railway transactions, or the parallax of Sirius. I took the paper from his hands, and read for the last time—

THE CANON OF COURTSHIP.

I. The fair object must have no grown-up brothers; they are dangerous.

II. She ought, if possible, to have no

father; or, at all events, he must be in the church, or a judge.

III. Failing this condition, the father must be a high-spirited man, certain not to press his daughter upon any one; master in his own house; for it takes a strong man to stop the she hurricane upon *certain* occasions.

IV. There must be no great political, or fashionable, or local influence, or other power of doing mischief in the family; vengeance may belong to the Lord, but it is often borrowed.

V. No letter-writing that can possibly be avoided must be allowed—*littera scripta manet*.

VI. No presents except flowers, which may be made just as significant in the West as in the East; they may mean nothing, or they may be made to say anything and everything—but *they are not evidence*.

VII. When tired, pick a quarrel; put the

girl in the wrong, and keep her there, that is generally easy enough; but some girls are too good-hearted, or forgive too easily; in that case, drop her suddenly without assigning a reason; say no more about it, and you will probably hear no more about it.

VIII. Avoid breaking off about settlements; any amount of rascality towards others of their own sex women forgive readily, and indeed often secretly admire you for it; but there is no forgiveness for meanness of any sort.

Such was the diabolical chart by which my friend Hawkins had hitherto, in a great measure, shaped his course through life. I thought the time was come for consigning these eight golden rules to the element they most properly belonged to.

"I think we may as well put this precious document into the fire," said I.

"I think so, too," replied he, rather in a brown study; and I threw it on the fire. The paper fell upon a place where the fire did not burn, and instead of igniting, smouldered away. "They wont burn," said he.

"No," I answered. "The vows they prompted were smoke, and they appropriately vanish in smoke, and leave nothing but a black mass behind them."

I could see that the hollow-heartedness of his own conduct was recalled to his mind by the comparison—not a very original one, by the by, but we will say nothing about that—of false vows to smoke. I began to have some hopes.

It is strange what influence associations, however oddly developed, exercise over our emotions. I remember myself, albeit, as I believe one of Shakspeare's men says, "not much given to the melting mood," once actually bursting into tears, when quartered

in a semi-fossilized village, called, or at least spelt, Oughterard—a whilome stronghold and capital city of the famous O'Flaherties, in the wilds of Connemara—for no better reason than that upon opening a drawer in which lay some pairs of, alas! very superfluous white kid gloves, the odour, redolent of the white muslin paradises of London, which it at once recalled to my mind in all their *décolleté* glory, overcame me; and, as I say, I actually shed tears. (I believe, by the way, Mr. Moore borrowed the idea of his beautiful poem of "Paradise and the Peri," from this circumstance.) Of course, none of my friends will believe this; but nevertheless, it is true; I, Somerset Cavendish Cobb, then and there wept. I have not repeated the practice often, it is a bad habit for a captain of Foot. This, however, is digression; and if there is anything I pride myself on, it is sticking to the point, as I did in the actual business in hand with Hawkins.

"That is all very well," said he, after a moment's consideration; "but who is to pay for it?"

I didn't know; so I shifted my hand.

"I'm sure," said I, "I wish anything of the sort was in store for me."

"Why should there not be?" asked my friend. "What's to prevent you from marrying?"

"My dear fellow," replied I, "some craft are built for cutters and some for schooners; I was launched for a cutter."

"Stick in a mizen and become a yawl," suggested he.

"A ketch more properly," answered I. "No, no, there's neither unity nor symmetry in a ketch. Besides, it has got a bad name—Jack might not be able to find a Jill."

"Well, then, marry to better yourself," returned he. "A clever fellow like you, that can dance and write verses, ought to do something among the pink-satin money-bags."

"No," said I,—I admit, not without a gentle sigh—"no; if it rained heiresses, Old Nick would hold an umbrella over my head."

"I do not see that," replied he. He always had a certain admiration of me, which, strange to say, was almost free from jealousy. "I should have supposed you were just the fellow to carry off the greatest prize in the market."

"Why, the fact is," I answered, "that every heiress expects either a lord or a fool; and I cannot qualify on either ground."

"I've got no money," said he, evidently wishing that he had; "and, you see, as to marrying any other—any woman with money, I mean—that is to say, going to look out for an heiress, why, you know, I should have to throw over——"

"Dinner is on the table, sir," said his servant; and I believe Hawkins was not sorry for the interruption; neither was I,

for I was ravenous, which was a much more legitimate reason for wishing for dinner than his, not that he had in the least lost his appetite. Luckily for us, the subaltern had spunged a dinner out of some of the adjacent gentlemen; so I had the field clear for my operations, and thought, as I sat down, that this was a wonderful piece of luck, and it would go hard if I did not make some way before we reached our sixth tumbler.

“Your difficulty in finding a wife,” said I, “will not be so much about money; for marrying a woman with inexpensive habits is as good as money; but in finding a domestic woman, who will make your home happy, and be what a mother ought to be to your children—that is what you want.” (The reader will perceive that in a good cause I was ready to lie through a deal board; and the most absurd thing was, that Hawkins swallowed every word I said with

a ludicrous confidence.) "This vagabonding life of ours requires repose. Now you have a fair opportunity; you can lay your hand upon what you want now."

"How?" asked he, somewhat nervously.

"Marry Ellen O'Reilly," said I, boldly; "she's desperately in love with you now; but if you don't look sharp, there's a parson there swears he'll marry her if she keeps him waiting ten years for it; and I'll tell you what's more, if once she gets it fairly into her head that you mean to desert her, he'll catch her heart at the rebound, and you'll see no more of her."

"Well, if she has no more steadiness than that," said Hawkins, hesitatingly—

"What do you mean by steadiness?" interrupted I; "it's you that want steadiness; you don't suppose that you're to whistle her off and on like a pet spaniel; besides, you have been making love to her in earnest—not a mere flirtation. This is no joke."

"I certainly do like her," said he; "but marrying is a serious matter."

"Winning a girl's heart, and poisoning the rest of her life, is a very serious matter," replied I; "it's the story of the boys pelting the frogs."

"It's hard we cannot have our innocent amusements," quoth he. "What's one to do in country quarters?"

"It may be play to you, but it's death to them," returned I. "I don't profess to be stiff laced myself; but there's a point to stop at."

"Confound all parsonages!" answered Hawkins, evidently running restive. "Have a cigar and some whiskey punch. How's the old grey mare getting on?"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD—THE FEELING OF THE
PULSE—UNDERGROUND ENJOYMENTS—THE CHILL
ON THE HEART—THE TUMBLE INTO A NEW
ACQUAINTANCE—THE TOKEN OF HOPE.

I DO not think that Hawkins had naturally a very bad heart, as I have already remarked. He was a good deal of a sensualist, perhaps; did not much like his wishes not being gratified; and whilst he scrupled very little to indulge in most of his gentle vices, was desirous of doing so with the least possible sin, scandal, or inconvenience to himself. He had just enough ability to enable him to make some progress in everything that he undertook, without strength of will

or purpose enough to insure success in anything; he had enough talent to feel the vague restlessness of genius, without having ever cultivated his mind sufficiently to give genius that accuracy and precision of object that satisfies its craving for something to do, by turning it into definite action. I do not think that his feelings had ever been called forth sufficiently to give him an idea of what the poisoned garments are in which feelings sometimes invest the human heart; and yet I should hardly have called him selfish. If he had money, he lent it readily enough; if he had not, he was still slow to borrow. In short, he was just the sort of man that, as a bachelor, degenerates steadily, year after year; but with a really sensible and loving wife, would gradually have moulted off his bad qualities, one after the other, strengthened and extended his good ones, and finally have reached a much higher standard of character than

bodily, was possible. The symptoms of which Johnny had complained the last time I had seen him, and which, though I hardly understood them, had given me a vague uneasiness, now fully justified my misgivings.

He had been attacked with locked jaw.

Half an hour saw me clear of Dunmanway on my return.

Once fairly on the road, and free of the bustle of departure, I had time and opportunity to examine my own feelings about this new calamity; I was puzzled beyond measure by their intensity. I certainly liked Johnny very much, but not more than I had liked many others, some of whom I had lost, for we died young in our regiment. I had felt much and deep sorrow for their loss; but it was a manly sorrow, such as a soldier feels for the comrade who has gone before him; but now I felt a sinking of the heart, a shudder over my whole frame, a vague

feeling of self-accusation, a foreboding of some very unbearable calamity to myself, arising from the share I had in his death—it happening under my command. I could not disabuse myself of the notion that I was in some degree responsible for it. I called upon Reason, and Reason acquitted me; but Feeling whispered that it was by no means clear that Lady Elizabeth, sonless, would take precisely the same view; or that Edith, brotherless, would or could avoid connecting the death of her brother with the commander in the skirmish in which he fell. How could I meet them, and what sort would be the meeting? Would a wall rise between her and me, or a common sorrow create a common sympathy?

Then, again, my thoughts would turn to poor Johnny. There was an ingenuousness about him, a freshness of heart, that had always, from the first day I had seen him,

attracted me. I had always, in my better moments, looked forward to training and preparing him for that struggle with the world and oneself which forms what we call life. I had once figured to myself Edith's face when she read the accounts of some brilliant achievement of his, and of the honours and praises heaped on him, and now—the reversed arms, and the muffled drum.

I could not keep from before my eyes a phantasm of the guard at the barrack-gate facing about to pay the last honour to the funeral; and, struggling with these thoughts, I entered an unpronounceable and almost inaccessible village, when about two hundred cur dogs turned out to pay their usual compliments of barking, biting the horse's heels, &c. &c. My horse, a thorough-bred, which had become unsafe in hunting from the loss of an eye, and I had therefore put into harness, shied, plunged, and finally

bolted; before I could get a pull on him, he had run up against a carriage that was a few yards before me. This only made him worse, and off he went like a cannon-ball *en ricochet*. There was a pig on the road—no uncommon event in Ireland. Of course the pig chose the most perverse time for crossing. I felt a tremendous jerk that flung me violently out of the car; a bright flash of fire blazed before my eyes, and then all was black and lifeless.

It is not particularly pleasant being stunned, nor is it very agreeable coming to oneself. When I did so, I presume that, in the regular romantic manner, I asked, Where am I? for I certainly did not know. I found myself in an unknown room, smelling strongly of whiskey (that is, the room), and an unknown gentleman and lady standing over me. I perceived above the chimney-piece a portait of Robert Emmett, and upon it that mysterious piece of furniture one so

often sees in pothouses, a wineglass with some wafers and toothpicks in it; and having made these preliminary discoveries, was informed that I was in the parlour of the Grand National Hotel, Killmacballygorafferty, where it appeared I had been taken by the gentleman whose carriage I had run against.

An indigenous Esculapius was present, insisting strongly upon rest and quiet, which I interpreted into meaning remaining a fortnight under his care, and declared that I would see him and the rest of the county of Cork suffering considerable posthumous inconvenience first. He said that it was madness attempting to move. I rejoined that it would drive me mad to stay, and that I preferred going mad at Ballymaccrocodile to Killmacballygorafferty, and rang the bell to order my car to be got ready immediately. That, however, was easier said than done; the car was disabled

by the accident; and, little as I liked the rattletaps of the country, I was about to order one, when the gentleman who had picked me up, inquiring where I wanted to go, informed me that he was going there himself, and offered to give me a seat, which I most joyfully accepted; and in ten minutes more was once more upon my way towards my destination.

I suppose the blow upon my head somewhat confused my thoughts, for they got into a most extraordinary mess. I think I must have been half dozing for the first mile or two; for poor Johnny and Hawkins, and Edith and the Colonel, and Lady Elizabeth and Ellen, and even sometimes Mary Anne O'Malley and the faithless Clementina Mullins, kept soaring and wheeling like a flight of crows before my eyes; and I once got an idea into my head that I was going to be hanged, I have no doubt arising from my late miraculous escape from the gallows.

At all events, my new friends must have come to the conclusion, that breaking heads does not mend manners; for I did not take the slightest notice of them for the first half hour.

At last, however, I came to a sense of my situation, and thought fit to bestow some little attention upon them. The gentleman was apparently about sixty, a tall, handsome man, polished and courteous in his manners, with a remarkable expression of thought and intellect in his countenance (not without a trifle of will), and that peculiar searching directness in his eye, that belongs to those, and those only, who habitually sift all matters that come before them. I should not have liked trying to throw dust into that man's eyes.

The daughter was a strange contrast, a delicate, fluttering, mignonne little thing, like an incarnated butterfly—Psyche in a straw bonnet. I suppose she took after the

mother, and that the grave, elderly gentleman, who I took for granted was her father, had required a plaything in his wife. I'm sure I could not conceive his wanting a "help" in anything. He smiled when I saw that I was coming fully to my senses, and my manners, and offered me some Eau de Cologne to chafe my temples with, which I found very refreshing.

"Oh! what a terrible, terrible, fall you got," said the young lady, holding up both her hands. "I was quite sure you were killed. Your head struck the ground like a cannon ball."

"I thought you must have been badly hurt," said the gentleman, with a quiet smile; "for the shrieks Nina would continue pouring forth would have waked the dead, and you took not the slightest notice of them."

"Now, don't, you naughty, bad papa," said Nina, with the dawning of a blush. "Shrieks, indeed! I only said 'Oh!'"

Of course, I began adoring Nina on the spot. I think I could fall in love with the venerable Nicholas' dam, if she would only howl loud enough *for* me. It is a fine institution that self-love; I believe we should hate three-fourths of our fellow-creatures, if we did not flatter ourselves that they were admiring (and envying) us in their secret hearts.

"I only said 'Oh!' and when you see a great man rolling and rolling up in the air like a—like an air balloon, and then coming down flop, flop, I'm sure one could not say less. What a strange sensation it was."

"We are about to spend some days at Ballymaccrocodile," said the gentleman; "the wife of the clergyman of the parish is a near relative—connexion of ours."

I now remembered having heard Mrs. O'Reilly speak of a Mr. Wharton, who had married a cousin of hers, and who was then travelling about Ireland, endeavouring, by

his personal presence on the spot, to solve the riddle that has so long puzzled the Saxon mind—What *is* Ireland? and how is it to be treated? Mrs. Wharton was long since dead; she died too early for the fair Nina's good, as I speedily discovered; and the father and daughter were now about to spend a few days at Ballymacrocodile. But a new perplexity now awaited me. The rectory was not the only attraction for them in that ancient Bally. I had scarcely informed them that I was quartered there, and modestly disclosed my name, before Nina seized me by the hand, and exclaimed—

“Then you are the kind, dear captain that takes such good care of my dear, dear little pet, Johnny Waldgrave?”

This speech struck me dumb, and poor Johnny lying perhaps on his death-bed.

“Good heavens! what is the matter with you?” continued she. “Papa! papa! he’ll

be stunned again. I mean he'll lose his senses. Oh, what have I done! What am I to do! What is it!"

"I am afraid," said I, "I have bad news about poor Johnny."

"Bad news!" shrieked the young lady. "What is the matter with him? he is not ill, is he?"

"He was wounded in a skirmish we had with a mob some time ago," said I, "and I have had bad news of his wound this morning; it is on that account that I am in such a hurry to get back."

"His wound is not dangerous, I hope?" asked Mr. Wharton, anxiously.

"I hope not," I returned; but it was, I suspect, pretty clear to Mr. Wharton how little real hope there was in that expression. He looked piercingly at me, then at his daughter, and, as if from consideration of her presence, pursued his inquiries no farther.

"Then those horrid Irish savages wounded him," said Nina, with a shudder; and then pulling down the window, screamed out—"Drive on, post-boy! fast, fast! very fast! Papa, I told you they liked killing people. Did they wound you, Captain Cobb?"

"I escaped," replied I.

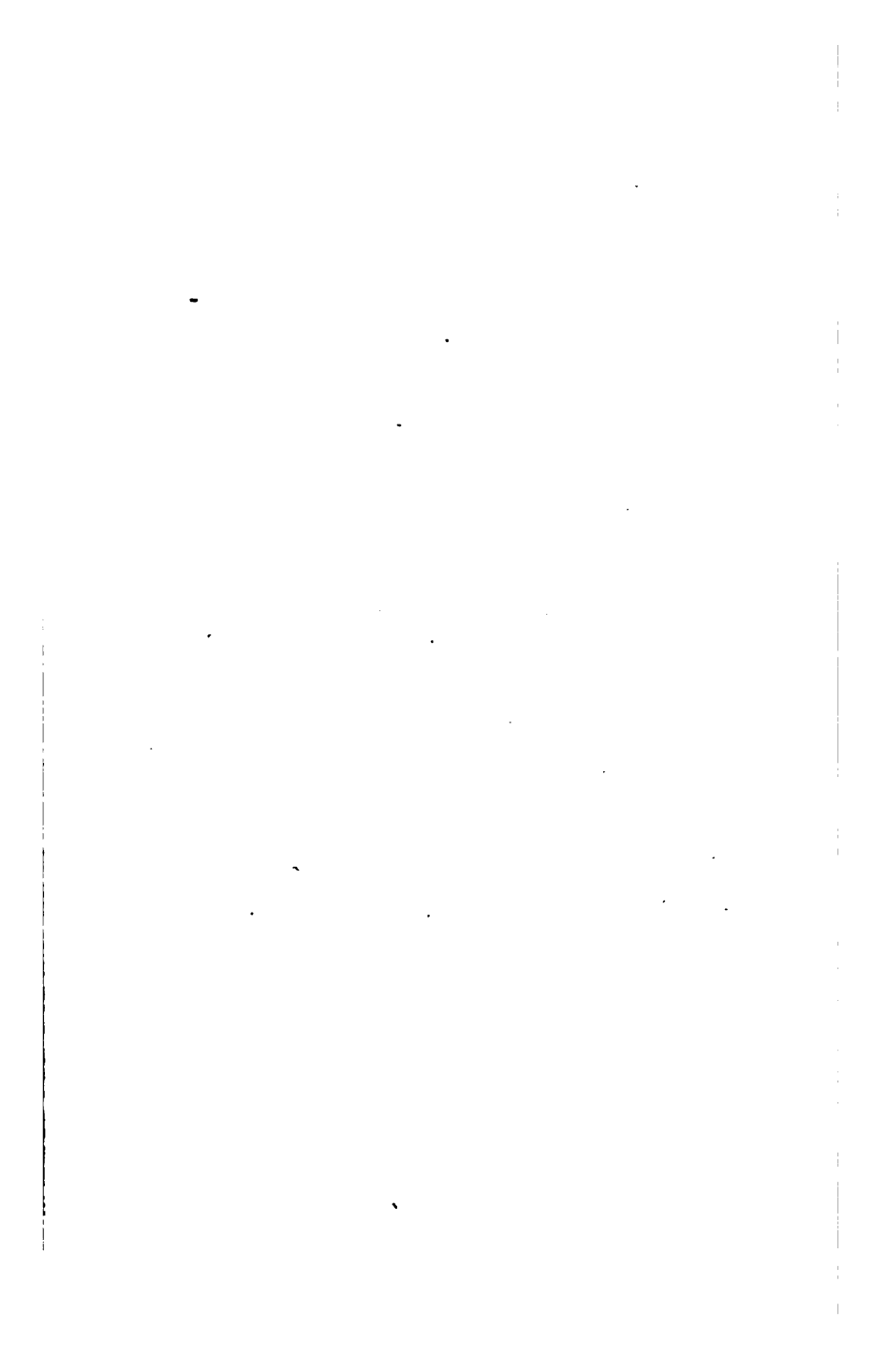
"And how did you escape," asked she quickly, "when he was hit?"

"No shot struck me," I returned; and I could not help a smile, for she evidently had taken into her head that I had escaped by flight, or some other precautionary measure; and then the smile faded fast away, as I thought that precisely the same view of the case might suggest itself to another young lady.

"What was the whole story; tell me all about it—everything from the beginning," said Miss Wharton; and I hope the modest narration of that short campaign, which occupied a considerable portion of the rest

of our journey, restored my character for personal courage in her opinion. It was a great relief to me when my history was ended, for by that time we were approaching the rectory; and as we drew near my feelings of suspense became intolerable, I could keep my thoughts to only one subject. Any attempt at the exercise of memory was intolerable, and the eyes seemed to burn in my head as we turned the corner that gave us a view of the rectory, and the token of hope met my eye. The window of the room which Johnny occupied was open. I knew there was life in that room, and not death, and I began to understand what was the meaning of the word **MERCY**.

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CONFESSIONS
OF
COUNTRY QUARTERS.

VOL. II.



CONFESSIONS
OF
COUNTRY QUARTERS:

BEING
Some Passages in the Life
OF
SOMERSET CAVENDISH COBB, ESQ.

Late Captain in the 120th Foot (Camberwell Rangers.)

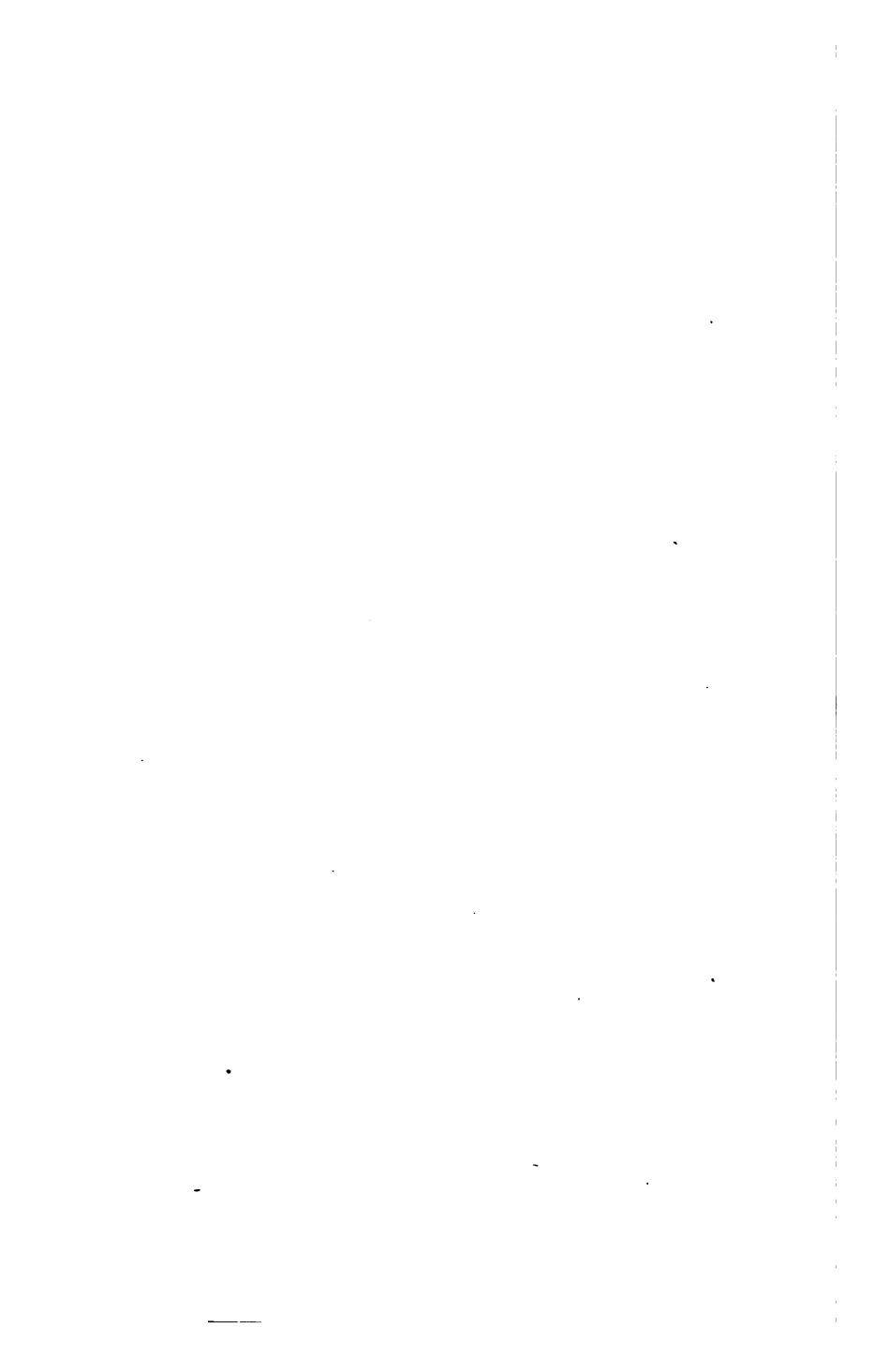
BY
CAPTAIN CHARLES KNOX,
AUTHOR OF "HARDNESS," "THE ARK AND THE DELUGE," ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

"Oh, ladies, beware of a gay young knight,
That loves, and then rides away."



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1852.



CONFESSIONS

OF

COUNTRY QUARTERS.

CHAPTER I.

MATTERS MENDING—ANGLING FOR HEARTS—THE
BATTLE OF THE ROCKS—UNDERGROUND HERESIES
—THE ISLE OF WONDERS.

THE shadow of death had passed slowly over that house, but it had passed away. Prompt and vigorous treatment had combated the destroyer, and the most alarming symptoms were even already so rapidly mitigating, that Grampus, our surgeon, though unable to pronounce the sufferer entirely out of danger, entertained in his own mind very little doubt of a favourable result. I went up to his room directly. I found him pale,

and evidently very weak; but to my eye he did not appear sinking. He was perfectly calm and composed.

"I'm glad you're come," he said. "I should not have liked—I wanted to thank you for all your kindness to me. I've often felt it, though I did not say as much about it as I ought to have done."

"Don't say anything about it now, Johnny," I said; "it's a pleasure to be of service to folk like you, and I'm glad to hear so good an account of you. I had a proper fright, I can assure you, when I got the letter this morning."

"They tell me I am getting better," said he, with a gentle smile, "and I sometimes think I am; but this morning early—it's very young to die, is not it?"

I was more affected by this simple question than I altogether like to confess, or

than I could very well conceal at the moment; but still hope was strong within me, and I said, cheerfully enough, "We must not think of that now, Johnny; we shall have many happy days together yet."

"They have been very kind to me here," said he. "You cannot conceive what a difference it makes being here from being in barracks."

"I don't doubt that, Johnny, my boy," said I. "You haven't been making love to Ellen, you young rogue, have you?"

"No," he said. "Love-making is not in my way."

"Tell that to the marines," answered I. "You've been making love to Nanny."

"She's too young," said he.

"She'll soon mend of that," replied I, much relieved by the improvement which was perceptibly taking place in his appear-

indeed, our surgeon, when he visited him that evening, confirmed me in that view.

Dinner was in the course of being served when I was about to leave the house, and I did not require much pressing to stay and partake of it. I found theology and geology by the ears.

"The power of passing the earth through all its stages in six days, or in six seconds, is not denied," said Mr. Wharton; it is the fact that we say did not happen."

"I cannot call a thing a fact which is irreconcilable with belief," returned Mr. O'Reilly, gravely.

"I deny that we are bound to believe that the six days of the Mosaic narrative are six of our days of twenty-four hours each," replied Mr. Wharton; "our-day consists of the period of one revolution of the earth round its axis, bringing the place we

are in into the same position with regard to the sun as it was twenty-four hours ago. Now this could not have happened on the first, second, or third day at all, because the existing relations between the celestial bodies were not established until the fourth day."

"But a day was a day in all time," urged O'Reilly.

"What the meaning of the Hebrew word that we translate day is, I cannot tell," returned Mr. Wharton; "but it was not till the fourth day or period that it was said, 'Let there be light in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years.' Then, for the first time, I affirm, was our present measurement of time introduced; 'and the greater light ruled the day.'"

Mr. O'Reilly shook his head; he had been accustomed to consider the geologists as a species of heathen, intellectual gipsies, who believed in grauwacke and Kentish rag, and not in the Gospel; but to have his flank turned by what I suppose he would have called a "professing Christian" (a favourite phrase among serious people), actually quoting Scripture to support those monstrous, underground heresies, was rather too much.

"Besides which," continued the other, "we are especially told, that each of the six first periods are over, whereas there is not a word said about the seventh being ended; in fact, it is going on now, and we are in it."

Mr. O'Reilly was silent, but evidently unconvinced; indeed, for the last twenty years he had been teaching all his parish-

ioners that the world had been made in a week; and he could not very well abandon the position. After a minute's pause, he asked Mr. Wharton his opinion of the state of Ireland. This was by way of changing the conversation; but I do not think he took much by his motion; it seemed going from the frying pan into the fire.

"The state of Ireland, sir," said Mr. Wharton, somewhat pompously, "is utterly rotten."

"Oh, such dreadful, dreadful beggars," interrupted Nina. "They crowded round the carriage like quite a hive of bees, with such horrible children."

"I am afraid that distress is very universal," said Ellen, gravely. "And the worst of it is, that the most clamorous are not the true objects; the really poor have to be sought."

“Why, the fact is,” said I, “that one great obstacle to the getting at the real causes (for they are many and various) of the present anomalous state of Ireland, is, that no public man, more especially no public man who studies Irish matters with a view to taking a part in Irish politics, *dares* speak the truth upon that dangerous subject. It is not merely the howl that would answer inconvenient truth from Irish members on both sides of either House; it is that the mind of England is not prepared to receive it: and, arguing solely from the social condition of England, is not competent to understand the imperfectly developed social condition of Ireland. Public men look to official employment—many as trading politicians, some from patriotic motives, wishing to enlarge the sphere of their own usefulness; some to carry out a pet crotchet;

but all such must be discreet: the having once said an unpopular thing, may close the door of Downing-street for many weary years; it might, perhaps, be allowable to hold forth about the violence, persecution, fraud, bribery, and corruption, which till lately has been the English receipt for governing Ireland. But how would it comport with the projects of a gentleman looking for office, to declare, in his place in Parliament, that at this present moment the stolid ignorance of the English people, and the cowardice of the government, are day by day producing disorganization, famine, pestilence, and death in Ireland?"

"How would the assertion be received, that at no period did any class of Irish, high or low, show themselves capable of self-government? that the most monstrous hotbed of corruption ever known, was the Irish Parlia-

ment, emulated in spirit, though not in power, by the grand juries, the county aristocracy; these, again, by the corporations, the borough magnates; and now, power being deposited more in the hands of the people, by the poor-law guardians," said Mr. Wharton.

"Would it be prudent in any one," said I, "to assert that three-fourths of the adult male population of Munster, Leinster, and Connaught, are at this moment at issue with the law of the land, and amenable to its penalties? yet something of the sort is the case. The direst offenders are numerous enough themselves; but the number who are accessory, either before or after the fact, to murders, attempts to murder, violent assaults, administering forcibly illegal oaths, serving threatening notices, houghing cattle, turning up land, and other whiteboy or ribband offences, is something, enormous.'

“Another class of those who are at issue with the law,” said Mr. Wharton, “is unhappily increasing,—the evasion, by those who really can afford to pay them, of rates, tithes, and rent, and the preventing, by a system of terror, those who are honestly disposed, from paying them,—this is spreading daily. The riots connected with the transport and exportation of food, seem, at a superficial view, to be simply the consequences of a famine, deplorable, but probably inevitable; but here again the anomalous nature of everything Irish peeps out. The people who commit these riots are *not* the famishing poor, but able-bodied vagabonds, actuated as much by love of mischief as of plunder, and in very many cases incited to such acts of violence by the farmers, who wish to produce such a state of insecurity to life and property (*of creditors*) as will enable

them successfully to resist the demand for rents."

"Certainly, it is not astonishing that an utter disregard for the law should prevail in Ireland," said Mr. O'Reilly, "when that disregard is ostentatiously paraded by their own archbishops. The 10th George IV. cap. 7, clause 24, runs thus:—

"Any person, other than the person thereunto authorized by law, who shall assume the name, style, or title, of archbishop of any province, bishop of any bishoprick, or dean of any deanery in England or Ireland, shall for every offence forfeit one hundred pounds."

"Very true," assented Mr. Wharton. "It may be an absurd clause, but it is the law of the land, and really matters very little whether the Most Reverend John M'Hale calls himself Archbishop of Tuam

or Archbishop of Ephesus, but such an example should not be shown from such a quarter. However, mark my words, that evil influence is in the course of extinction. For years upon years the priests have been maintaining their political authority by acting upon the superstitious feelings of the people, and promising them all sorts of advantages which can never be realized. The day of awakening will arrive some time, and then the people will not take the trouble of separating the priest from the agitator; and the outbreak of indignation at the treachery so practised upon them, will sweep away priest and agitator together, and with them the Roman Catholic church. Everything goes by the run in Ireland. The success of St. Patrick was short, sharp, and decisive. In our own days, the transfer of allegiance from the landlords to the priest

was effected in a few months, and Father Matthew fulfilled a mission apparently impracticable, in an inconceivably short space of time. I cannot tell when the storm will burst, but I can see the little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, rising out of the sea."

"Another English absurdity," remarked Mr. O'Reilly, and "English unfairness, is the Irish exemption from taxation. The Imperial Parliament seemed to reason thus: 'Because a thousand a year goes a great deal farther in Ireland than in England, therefore it should contribute less to the State.' I believe that assessed taxes would be valuable, if they produced nothing above the cost of collection, for the moral effect alone. The horses and cars only idle those who ought to work, and the dogs are a plague."

"I can swear to that," said I, putting my hand to my head.

"Then we have again the clamour about absentees," said Mr. O'Reilly. "As for absenteeism existing at all, to the extent it has credit for, it is a mere phantom, and when it does exist, as, for instance, in the great English absentee estates, they are the most liberally managed in the country."

"Why don't you educate the people?" asked Nina.

Mr. O'Reilly smiled at the true young-lady specific. Mr. Wharton smiled too, and the conversation dropped.

Indeed, I had some doubts myself whether the terrors of big A would be sufficient to put down Ribbandism, or the fascinations of little B induce Pat to work. I do not think that geography would lend him self-dependence, or the use of the globes persuade him to mend his breeches. I was roused from a reverie upon this subject by Miss Nina's asking me whether I had read th

last new novel, entitled "Man and His Victim, by Arabella Potts." I had read that delectable work; it was a tolerably fair specimen of the usual woman's novel, in which all the female characters were saints, angels, and martyrs, and all the male monsters, heathen, and cannibals; the natural feelings and affections belonging to the portion of fathers, brothers, and husbands, being suspended for the occasion.

I answered, that I had read it, and that it was very "affecting." Ellen looked somewhat incredulous as to my having been much moved by it. Nina had no reason to doubt; said she delighted in it, it gave her such a charming sensation, and said she was sure I had a good heart; whence I discerned that "affecting" is a better word than "interesting," and have used it ever since upon similar occasions, with invariable success.

Johnny was almost in high spirits when I went to see him before going home, and under the fostering care of the worthy clergyman's family rapidly approached convalescence. Mr. Wharton remained at Ballymacrocodile much longer than I imagined possible to any one who was his own master. I believe the reason that this sojourn of his appeared so unaccountable to me was, that being myself *quartered* in that unsavoury village, I naturally and militarily concluded that it was the most unendurable spot on the face of the habitable globe.

His stay, however, afforded me a good deal of innocent amusement in watching the incessant squabbles between Nanny and Nina. I never saw anything like their ceaseless sparring. Ill-natured people said they were jealous of one another about Johnny. Of course I did not believe a

word of that. There was one thing that they both agreed in most cordially, and that was in perfectly execrating Mary Anne O'Malley. That young lady, fairly headed off Johnny, honoured me with some delicate attentions, which, I blush to say, were rather thrown away; I didn't want her, and she had a disagreeable trick of making one repeat everything one said, which had, of course, speedily the effect of silencing me altogether.

A few days passed very pleasantly for me; for I liked Mr. Wharton more and more the more I saw of him. I began to like Nina too, and took to teasing her. I think she liked that, or else she liked me, or, at all events, she liked the notice, and we became very intimate. Little Alice, whom I had considered a perfect model of love and kindness, took a violent aversion

to her. I do not know why it was, but she seemed never tired of abusing her to me.

"I hate her," she said to me, one day; "I wish she would go away; she is a bad girl."

"My dear child," said I, "you must not call her a bad girl; you know no harm of her, and should not say such things of any body."

"She is a bad girl," persisted the young lady.

"How do you know?" asked I.

"Because I know she is," she returned, half crying, and stamping; "and you ought to know it too."

I did not, at the time, nevertheless, though I made some discovery of the sort afterwards, but of course the perception of it was instinctive in Alice.

CHAPTER II.

THE ARMY AT SCHOOL—THE BOOTED PASTORS—THE
CHALDRON OF FASHION—THE WITCHES THAT
BREW THEREIN—MARS IN THE FASHION—THE
BUBBLING OF THE FOUNTAIN OF HONOUR, AND
THE DRAUGHT THEREFROM OF HALF-AND-HALF.

WE were now approaching the period when the regiment was to be inspected by Major-General Knightsbridge, D.C.L. and F.A.S. The regimental inspection, I must inform my non-military readers, is a sort of periodical visitation of their various districts, by some elderly gentlemen who have lived to the rank of general, and who exercise a sort of episcopal superintendence over cer-

tain tracts of country; and, indeed, they differ little, in point of gravity and respectability, from their right reverend brethren who reside in the cathedral towns.

These barrack-yard solemnities are always celebrated during the fine weather, the age and infirmities of the principal personages rendering it highly inexpedient to expose them to any other, and these rites of Bellona frighten the young officers into fits, being, in fact, a sort of practical catechism, in which there are no godfathers or godmothers allowed, and for which they have not the responses always by heart. There is a plague of sections and a pestilence of sub-divisions; the members seem rebelling against the body; for one's deadliest enemies are one's right hand and one's left, and there is the awful rehearsal of a sort of war-dance, worthy of the Pawnee Indians,

which, with a good deal of dry humour, is termed the sword-exercise, whose most amiable characteristic is, that you know precisely when your enemy is going to strike you, and guard accordingly; I am sure I hope if ever I have to encounter French Hussars, that those valiant foemen will have learned the same exercise, and adhere rigidly to it; it would be unpleasant if their cut 4 corresponded to our guard 6.

Johnny was, by this time, pretty well, and was to be shown to the general as a damaged lot of food for powder, in order that he might go on leave for the recovery of his health as soon as the inspection or visitation was over; as he was not, however, to fall in, he was not bewildering himself with flanks and fronts, or practising the war-dance of the Pawnees; on the contrary, I found him, the morning before,

reading the "Morning Post," which Lady Elizabeth had sent him—I suppose because her name appeared in the list as one of the favoured few invited to dinner, to meet a most alarming quantity of Royalty at an awfully grand festivity at the Marchioness of Mesopotamia's, which and whom the fashionable world had been worshipping for the last three weeks. I rather thought Johnny was secretly envying the six hundred notabilities whom the Marchioness had canonized by invitations, and ran my eye over the list to see if Edith's name appeared there. I soon found it, and began to think I should have liked to have been there myself. However, it was no use thinking in Ballymacrocodile, or any other Irish town, I knew, so I put a bold face on the matter.

"Johnny, my boy," said I, "all that reads very well in the 'Morning Post;' the

list is magnificent, like Swift's Troop of Horse.

'The dukes they come first, and the marquises
follow,
Tantara ! Tantara ! whilst all the boys hollo ;'

" But when you read it in the ' Post,' you have not to go on your knees to a cross old cat for an invitation, and the ' Post' won't stifle you with heat in hanging you half the night on a banister, or stun you with the roar and the gabble, the bubbling and the simmering of that great human stewpan. Honour's honour, Johnny, my boy, but a duke stands just as heavy on your toe as a coalheaver—and pleasure's pleasure, but it isn't so pleasant when that great fat woman, that you can't refuse, insists upon your taking her and her great bubbly daughters down to supper, and you see by the clock on the stairs that it only wants ten minutes to two,

and that Fanny, that particular Fanny, will be gone before you can escape. When I was a young man of fashion, Johnny, and used to pay the reporters for printing my name in the fashionable news (how I used to exult in reading it, and how all those six hundred blessed angels at Lady Mesopotamia's are crowing at this moment); in those days, Johnny, I discovered that the grandest parties were not the pleasantest always; and I thought that a very bold stretch of thought at the time, I can tell you."

"Well, then, what sort of society do you like best yourself?" asked Johnny.

"I think," replied I, "a country house, if it is large enough, and there is a sufficient quantity of bye-play going on, and you do not happen to care for anybody yourself."

"By the bye," said Johnny, thoughtfully,

thinking that sort of thing might have become epidemic in the regiment. On the contrary, they all declared that they had been thinking and talking about nothing but Major-General Knightsbridge, though I believe, that in their hearts it was the brigade-major who accompanied him that took up their attention.

Major-General Knightsbridge, like nearly all the generals of the present day, who can still walk or ride, had been in the Guards, the Line rarely surviving the rank of colonel without crutches; he had commanded a company by means of a colour-sergeant, who was the only man in it with whom he was personally acquainted; and a battalion, with the help of Providence and an adjutant. He had acquired immortal renown by the steadiness and gallantry with which he had occupied the back yard of a pothouse in

Westminster, where he was locked up with his company on the day of the coronation of George IV., to defend the British crown, in case the champion failed against the attacks of the unhappy Caroline; and as the crown is still safe, I suppose he deserved all the praise he obtained, as well as the command of the Southern District in Ireland, over which (the brigade-major being a smart hand) his episcopal jurisdiction gave great satisfaction to the authorities, and I have no doubt will lead to the colonelcy of a regiment, and probably one in India, to say nothing of a responsible command, or possibly a lucrative government.

It is a beautiful peculiarity in the British army, that as long as an officer is young and untried,—and that, in fact, nobody knows or cares what he is, or what he is

likely to turn out—nor, indeed, does it signify to any one, so long, in fact, as he is *in statu pupillari*—the Horse Guards exercise an unlimited power of promotion, in turn or out of turn, right or wrong, just or unjust; but the instant that the officer has attained that point of age, rank, and service, that makes his personal character and qualifications matter of almost general notoriety, placing him, too, in a position of responsibility, that invests his actions and decisions with all the deep and serious importance that belongs to brilliant military conceptions, or grave military errors, then, when the honour of the British arms, the discipline and even the safety of British armies, the well-being of the soldier, and the service of the state, imperatively call for selection, in steps rotation, the colonel who has not seen a regiment for years, is called upon to

command brigades; the twelve or fifteen years' fallow being supposed to have invigorated his military clay, and sharpened his military capacity, and the modern Cincinnatus is again called from his Sabine farm. It is doubtful whether the ploughshare or the sword are as yet the convertible terms they are to be some day. Our neighbours have no doubt on the subject. They manage those things better in France.

Well, the day appointed for the ceremonial arrived; the venerable functionary who was to preside arrived too; he was as well as could be expected (a little gout, perhaps, and a tendency to a cold in the head, but we took care to keep the doors shut behind him when he went round the barracks, as well as a trifling asthma allowed him). The regiment received him in line with the usual honours, then broke into open column

right in front, and marched past in slow and quick time. He seemed particularly struck with the gallant appearance of the light company. The inspection went on in the usual manner, and we did our best to amuse him till dinner-time, showing him the barrack-yard, the men's kits, the hospital, and any other little interesting objects we could think of—all which must have been very refreshing to him, recalling, as they must have done, the days and pursuits of his youth. Jenkins ventured upon some trembling facetiæ, and the major described the bay of Galway, and I dare say he was not very much bored.

Sir Michael Angelo D'Arcy L'Estrange, Baronet, of Plantagenet Castle, in the neighbourhood, and Stephens' Green, Dublin, and Herring-pond Prospect Villa, near Bray, had sent us a haunch of venison to regale

the major-general with, in consequence of which we were obliged to ask Sir Michael Angelo to dinner, together with his two cubs of sons, and another baronet, Sir Marmaduke Figs, who was on a visit at Plantagenet Castle, I believe with a view of devising some plan by which all baronets were to be entitled to wear peacocks' feathers, made judges or bishops, or something very exalted, the common vulgar not being sufficiently impressed with their baronnetorial dignity. The four guests cost us above three pounds, and one of the cubs smashed a decanter and three claret glasses, so we did not make much of the haunch; but I for one did not grudge the money, the two baronets showed such sport about their Order.

Of course, at dinner, I sat next to the general, who had most benevolently given

tage of old Figs' presenting an address to knight him, and soon after gave him a baronetcy.

As the general concluded his Mesopotamian anecdote, suggesting to me how infinitely it would civilize us savage battalions of the Line to be frequently inspected by such fashionable generals, I heard Sir Michael Angelo addressing Sir Marmaduke as follows:—

“ There is nothing more remarkable, Sir Marmaduke, in the heraldic literature of Europe, than the fact that, for two centuries, the BARONETS (an order of high hereditary nobility, combining baronial and knightly honours with the incidents and ornaments that to such dignities appertain,) should, from inadvertence, or any other cause, have allowed many of the due hereditaments and functions of their estate to

remain unexercised, should have ceased to consider themselves members of a STATE INSTITUTION, next in position to the Peerage, having lofty social duties to discharge, and have lapsed from the eminence of a chartered order down to the condition of a parcel of disintegrated titularies, having neither common views, common sympathies, nor common utilities."

"True," replied Sir Marmaduke, loftily; "and there is something in this alike prejudicial to ourselves and to the various other branches of the aristocracy, whether above or below us. Our order consists of one hundred and fifty members of the House of Peers, and about half that number of baronets are always members of the House of Commons. We have, therefore, if properly exercised, a predominant voice in both Houses of the Legislature, and, in addition

to this, the OBJECTS of the Baronetage which are separate from, and more noble than its *rights*, place us at the head of the SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS of the realm. The Baronetage was instituted to civilize Ulster."

"I think it might be well if it tried its hand at the other three provinces now," I submitted; "there is room for exertion."

"Very true," returned Sir Marmaduke, "there might be a distinctive Munster, Leinster, and Connaught Baronetage."

"With hereditary objects so meritorious and so enduring," said Sir Michael Angelo, "with a position so dignified in the scale of British society, and taking into account the vast wealth and power of our brotherhood, it is unquestionable that if ever any degree of men were called upon, in honour, to be unanimous, to be decided and zealous in a cause, the baronets are. It is a part of

the allegiance we owe to the Crown, and an essence of the relative obligations that cement the constituent gradations of the British aristocracy, that the baronets should each and all vindicate the common rights of their Order, and should stand by one another in reviving the chartered rights and prerogatives of the body to its fullest extent. Indeed, I remarked," continued he, after a pause to take breath and sherry, "on the continent, how little the dignity of a baronet is understood or appreciated abroad, every one regarding it as the diminutive of the title bestowed on the tailor, Stultz, and the violin-player, Paganini, instead of esteeming it as a class of HIGH NOBILITY, next to the dignity of a Lord, Baron, or Peer of the British empire, with rank above all titular *noblesse*, whether calling themselves Marquises, Counts, or Barons."

I confess a certain vision of Montmorenci, Dalberg, Visconti, and some others, rose before my eyes at this moment. I wondered what they would say to this, considering that the oldest of their Order can be little more than two centuries old; but I wisely held my tongue, and it was lucky I did; I should have been sure to have blundered upon a sore place. I have since learned that there was a grand national heraldic baronetorial movement going on to restore them to some supernatural privileges they had been promised when they undertook to colonise Ulster. I believe what they wanted was to be called "The Honourable," to wear a coral necklace, with a bloody hand, like an order of knighthood, and to appear at quarter-sessions in peach-coloured velvet inexpressibles, and some other such "hereditaments;" and that several respectable elderly

gentlemen, fathers of families, actually believe and take part in this great resuscitating movement of these pilasters of the State, which is to comprise the erection of a baronet's club-house, dame's school, library, lunatic asylum, cemetery, &c. &c. Indeed, I have been so fortunate as to see a circular addressed to the Order by one of themselves, in which the above conversation was tolerably faithfully embodied.

Jenkins, our wag, who had listened to all this rhodomontade, remarked afterwards, that the Order and its nobility reminded him of a boy surreptitiously riding behind a carriage, but in momentary dread of the "whip behind." Notwithstanding which sharp remark, I have no doubt Jenkins would have liked exceedingly to have become a baronet himself, and indeed I do not know that I should shout "Nolo Baronetari!" very vociferously myself.

I believe that half the people who sneer at baronets do so merely from disappointment that a baronet's toady derives no position therefrom in the eyes of the other fashionables, shines in no borrowed light like that which invests the toadies of the peerage, though I must say that I think the project of erecting a monument to the illustrious men of the Order, on the model of Trajan's Column, will probably draw forth some ill-natured remarks. It is sure to be contrasted with the other copy—the Column in the Place Vendôme; and I doubt whether the performance of the Order will stand a comparison with the Old Guard. I say this in all friendship to the Order, as it is possible that these lines may meet the eye of an august personage, and I have heard my Lady Caroline Cobb say, that she thought *some sort* of title *ought* to be here-

ditary in the collateral branches of the
PEERAGE.

General Knightsbridge retired early. I afterwards learned that he had a bason of gruel, and hot water for his feet, at the principal hotel in Ballymacrocodile—the Royal Brian Boroihme Arms—a turkey-cock struttant regardant in the first quarter, a goose currant cacklant in the second, a jackass brayant kickant in the third, at a lion boxant in the fourth. And Sir Michael Angelo and Sir Marmaduke retired soon after, the former unhappily failing in inducing the youthful scions of the “great social institution” to retire too, a failure which led to the catastrophe of the decanter and three claret glasses above mentioned; for the youths got very drunk, and at one time protested that they “would not go home till morning” in a dog-cart they had waiting

in the barrack-square all night, and which, I regret exceedingly to say, they did *not* upset on their way back.

I must, however, do them the justice to say, that any slight conviviality that might have occurred was not altogether their fault. There is no time when the officers of a regiment feel and act so like schoolboys broke loose for the holidays, as when the inspection is over and their minds at ease: and the premonitory symptoms of what we termed "a wet night" in the 120th were so apparent, that I, contrary to my usual custom, withdrew myself from the genial influence of the hour, and strolled down to the parsonage.

I wanted to see Johnny before he went, and to settle when I was to make my appearance at Beauchamp Hall, to indoctrinate him as to what parts of my character and con-

duct he was to communicate to Edith, and what he was to hold his tongue about; for I am quite of Solomon's opinion, that there is a time to speak, and a time to hold one's peace; and as I felt certain that I should be the subject of a great deal of his conversation with Edith, I thought it as well to direct it into a proper channel. I did not profess to say that all my life would stand a very severe scrutiny, I did not imagine that it was much worse than my neighbours, but it is not easy to come up to the ideal of a young lady of nineteen, though I do not know what put it into my head to think of it at all; I wasn't thinking of marrying, for I was perfectly sober at the time.

CHAPTER III.

NEW PERILS FOR JOHNNY—POETRY OF INCOMPREHENSIBILITY—ROMANCE OF A LOAF—THE CONFESSOR IN HIS YOUTH—QUANTUM MUTATUR—THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS—WHITE MUSLIN HURRICANE—MANY A SHAFT AT RANDOM SENT (PROBABLY THE READER KNOWS THE REST), ETC.

I FOUND upon my arrival at the parsonage, that Johnny was not by any means in the violent hurry to get away that I had always been in the habit of associating with the idea of leave of absence; which I had considered a plunge into the cleansing and soothing waters of humanization, calculated to preserve one, by occasional immersion, from relapsing into utter barrack barbarism.

He certainly had a good reason for staying, for Mr. Wharton had offered him a seat in his carriage if he would wait three days longer; which offer he jumped at, of course. I heard afterwards that Nanny looked as black as thunder when the offer was made, and a great deal blacker when it was accepted; which, considering that she thereby gained three days more of his society, seemed to me very strange. I suppose, however, that it was one of those instances of feminine perversity that are perpetually presenting themselves to our astonished masculine eyes—a beautiful arrangement of Providence, to keep in full development that organ of “What’s the maternowishness?” in the young male animal, which otherwise might, and probably would, be absorbed in the organ of “What’s for dinnerishness?” and often is in after life.

However, by the time I arrived, she had recovered her equanimity, and had reached a stage of heavenly resignation that it was quite refreshing to behold; that is to say, she said there was nothing the matter with her, and looked as if she was going to burst into tears every moment, whilst she was cutting the bread and butter. I thought of Charlotte and Werter at the time; not from any real analogy in the cases, but simply on account of the bread and butter, which is, I believe, inseparably connected in all well regulated minds with that wonderful history. I suppose no man ever yet pronounced the word Sternhold without Hopkins, instantly presenting itself to his mind. Day and night are not more inseparably united than Day and Martin; there are words and ideas that run in couples like double stars. I once tried to investigate

the cause of these mysteries, in a very ingenious work on the "Duality of the Brain," but found that Providence had not issued brains of the requisite capacity to captains of Foot, and so abandoned the subject to the corps of Royal Engineers, whose airs upon their double-barrelled cerebral organs are so familiar to us all.

After all, there *is* something in bread and butter—the true domestic pabulum, that embodies the Lares and Penates of fireside life. The proverbial description of a snug, comfortable householder, whose charity begins at home—being one who knows on which side his bread is buttered—the household gods embodied with household loaves.

Byron, that great aberration of the intellect, fully appreciated it. Listen to him—

“ 'Tis true your budding miss is very charming,

But shy and awkward at first coming out ;

So much alarmed, that she is quite alarming ;

All giggle, blush, half pertness, and half pout ;

And glancing at mamma, for fear there's harm in

What you, she, they, or it may be about.

The nursery still lisps out in all they utter ;

Besides, they always smell of bread and butter.”

I remember, when William the Fourth was king, I was a sentimental ensign, and played the flute, being in charge of an uninhabited rock in Plymouth Sound, with five-and-twenty thirty-two pounders, being captivated by a Stonehouse fairy ; and I used to stand on my desert island (it was called Mutton Island, because there was not grass enough on it to feed a rabbit), and gaze like Napoleon on the sea and the setting sun, and think that the seventh heaven of married life would be to sit at tea with her sitting upon my knee, and feeding me with bread and butter.

In my then lovely simplicity, I communicated this poetical idea of mine to some of my friends, and of course it reached her, which frightened me into fits, for, the heavenly innocent that I was, I thought she would never forgive me. She did though, and in a manner so emphatic as to be still more alarming. I have been more cautious in communicating my domestic dreams to a large circle of acquaintance since that event, and, indeed, have materially altered my views about tea, as I dare say my Titania has hers; for she subsequently married an opulent brewer, and weighs twelve stone.

The damsels of that aquatic garrison used to tyrannize dreadfully over me in those days. In the morning Mary Jones used to crush me with her indifference, and in the evening Sarah Brown used to tell me I didn't waltz in time. At dinner Jane

Green used to cold shoulder me into a thing more like a mayonnaise than a living man, and at tea Anne Hopkins used to snub me about my riding; that was what I got for holding silk and carrying teacups, but I soon learned better.

However, to return to the bread and butter. I had just received a slice from Nanny, when suddenly happening to look at Nina, I perceived her eye fixed upon Johnny, with an expression which was by no means unfamiliar to me, and which I had never yet seen without a smartish flirtation following soon after. I had suspected this, and I did not like it. My idea of Nina was that of a very playful kitten with remarkably sharp claws, and in no respect particular as to what use she made of them. I felt convinced that if she once established a flirtation with Johnny,

she would pursue it with a pitiless disregard as to any suffering she might occasion him, and throw him over mercilessly whenever she had had enough of him. Of course this opinion of mine is the view of a brute, of a beast, of a bear, of everything horrible, atrocious, and mannish between chuck farthing and manslaughter both inclusive; but I cannot help that; so I thought then, so I think now.

Johnny was certainly rather soft-hearted, as indeed was very proper and correct at his age; he had just enough waterproofing to that organ to enable him to shake off the showers of the balsam of blarney, with which such slashing military practitioners as Mary Anne O'Malley, Clementina Mullins and Co., spoiled his young affections; but Nina was a very different customer. She had a great deal of what "Locke on

the Human Understanding" would denominate the corkscrew nature in her. Even with me she wormed her way into a sort of fantastic authority, that made me find great difficulty in disobeying her behests, and I believe, if she had had time to study my character a little more, she would have ended by making me do whatever she pleased.

Wilful to a degree, she still melted in a moment; and though from caprice she was very exacting, she was remarkably unselfish. I do not believe that, in the flirtation that she was preparing for Johnny, she had the slightest idea of the possibility of its embittering the best portion of his life, or if she had, she would have satisfied her butterfly conscience with the usual female salve—"Oh, men have no feeling"—and then gone on to lure him on into all manner of troubles.

Yet, in never consulting her own comfort, never seeking a more comfortable chair, a better place, or the first look at a new object, the first reading of a new book, and all those sort of little self-denials, those little social self-sacrifices, she was exemplary, and she was neither envious nor jealous of her best friend's dearest, darlingest new bonnet.

Meantime little Alice came up, with a slip of a paper and pencil, to remind me of a promise of mine to execute a portrait of a large, sleek, matronly cat, which was then reposing in great comfort and dignity upon the rug, and I have no doubt, in its feline mind, wishing that it was winter, that there might be a fire in the grate. This promise I proceeded to perform to Alice's great delight, who, as eyes, ears, back, tail, and the various component parts

"she's *such* a beauty, and *such* a fortune, all the men are dying for her. Wherever she goes, she makes such a sensation."

"What has she got?" asked I.

"Oh, she's sixty thousand pounds," said Nina, with a nod, as much as to say—there, who can resist that sixty thousand!

"Sixty thousand!" said I; "let me see. Three into sixty makes twenty, and the half of that is ten. That wont do: if you go for gold, ten thousand is not enough."

"Sixty thousand, I said," insisted Nina.

"Yes," replied I, "but I computed it in the usual manner, and I make it ten."

"How can you make it ten, Captain Cobb?" remonstrated Alice. "You always say such strange things about sums."

"It is a way we have in the army," I replied, not wishing to derange Alice's arithmetical notions, which were somewhat

kaleidoscopic as it was; for she and I had a standing battle upon an allegation of hers, which no earthly power could controvert in her mind—viz., that if twice-two made four, twice-four must be two—a method of calculation which was, as she truly observed, fair play, but not, as I thought, pure mathematics.

“She has sixty,” persisted Nina; “I’m sure that’s enough to tempt any man.”

“I don’t want money,” modestly remarked Johnny, with an insane idea that the circumjacent ladies would believe him.

“Oh! Mr. Waldgrave!” said Ellen.

“Oh, Johnny!” said Nina.

“Oh!” said Nanny; she did not like calling him Mr. Waldgrave, and dared not call him Johnny.

“Oh!” said Mrs. O’Reilly; and even little Alice could not help putting in her

small "Oh!" into this choral interjection of disbelief.

I thought I might as well try my hand at showing him up.

"Oh! Johnny!" said I, and he turned upon me like a tiger cat.

"Why you know very well, Cobb, that I do not; and that when Mrs. De Popkinsonne wanted me to make up to that rich Miss Archangel, I told her that I could not live upon hides and tallow, and that the Baltic trade was not in my line."

"Johnny, my boy," said I, "Archangel is not on the Baltic."

"Well, what does that matter?" asked Alice; "if it isn't, it might as well have been there."

"Archangel is a town upon the river Dwina," said I, entertaining myself watching the impatient twitchings of little Alice's

countenance, "forty miles from the White Sea."

"How provoking you are," said Alice; "you should never talk geography out of school-room."

"It's a shame of you to turn against me," said Johnny, reproachfully, evidently highly desirous of vindicating his character for disinterestedness in the eyes of somebody in the room. "You've said to me yourself that a man ought to get money with his wife. You know that I have always told you that I could not reconcile it to my feelings to marry a woman who was very much richer than myself."

"I could," said I; "I've an amiable weakness upon that point; but that's a trifle; however, Johnny, never mind what they say; some men do indulge in a trifle of fortune-hunting as amateurs—most women practise it professionally."

The she-hurricane that followed this exceeded my most sanguine expectations; a live shell dropping into the room could hardly have produced a greater sensation. Ellen accused me of being capable of robbing a church. Nanny declared that I deserved to be carried about the country in an iron cage. Nina, clenching her little hand and gnashing her flashing teeth, asked me how I dared say such a thing, promoting me, at the same time, to the rank of Prince of the Powers of the Air, in an emphatic dissyllable. Mrs. O'Reilly, who knew that that was not my real opinion, and saw my object in propounding it, merely laughed; but my little friend Alice, not perfectly aware that an attack upon her own sex had roused the storm, but full of gratitude for the "pattern of puss," and other small indulgences, stood stoutly up for me, offered to give bail

in her own person that I would not rob any church, or house, or anything, for anything in the world, gravely rebuked Nanny for her project, telling her that lions, and tigers, and wild beasts were carried about in cages, not good, kind captains, and that she was like the wicked prince in the "Arabian Nights," who carried about his enemy in an iron cage, and then put his eyes out, which episode of Tartar warfare, I did not think it necessary to inform her, was written in a grimmer and truer chronicle than that of the Thousand and One, and she fairly told Nina that if she spoke such naughty words she would most assuredly be formally consigned to the charge of the personage whose name she used so irreverently.

A minute afterwards I repented of the remark, for there was a peculiar expression of reproach in Ellen's countenance that

smote a sort of a conscience I had. More sinned against than sinning, she, at least, I felt, could not be included in my sweeping condemnation of the terrestrial angels. However, under all the circumstances, I could not there and then, in the face of that assembled family, give her by name plenary absolution from the charge, so I was compelled to leave her to the consolations of a good conscience, which, as some eminent moralist has justly observed, "is better than gold or precious stones." I suppose it is.

"Motives for marriage cannot be always very accurately examined," said Mrs. O'Reilly ; "circumstances are sometimes very powerful and very imperative."

"The man is the responsible person," pleaded I. "It is his duty—his most sacred duty, not to win a woman's heart, not to tempt her into loving him, still less

into marrying, unless he sees some reasonable expectation of subsistence, and it is better that it should be so; let the woman obey her feelings, the man his reason."

"Oh! you iceberg—you Eddystone—you Pompey's Pillar—you galvanized dead body—you cold shoulder of mutton—you—" shrieked Nina; "don't you talk about marriage; I'd rather have a Turk's notion than yours. The commandant's statue in Giovanni has more heart in him than you have; indeed, I should like Don Giovanni himself better than I should you; for though he had his failings, he was not cold and calculating, at all events. If ten thousand pounds makes liking, twenty makes love, that's your arithmetic; you'd go to the church door for a thousand a-year, and there stop to haggle for twelve hundred before you went up to the altar. Go to Greenland with you!"

Little Alice, who, until this dismissal, seemed as if she could never be tired of lying on the rug, comparing, as she expressed it, "live puss with picture puss," looked up now; her whole face flushed, her teeth grinding, her eyes flashing, her little hands clutching convulsively—a beautiful little picture of an embodied fury, now gathered herself up for a spring, and I believe would have flown at Nina like a young tiger cat if I had not fortunately restrained her. Nina, half startled at the child's impetuosity, half afraid that she had said too much, was the most delicious picture possible of a pretty confusion. (The thoughts of being fed with bread and butter flashed across my mind directly); but I saw that I had again got into a worse mess than ever; for Ellen, who always appeared to attach a mystic value to whatever I said,

seemed to interpret my last observation into an announcement that Hawkins was finally unfaithful, and, indeed, into an approval of his conduct. No such thought entered my mind. Heaven knows, I was not particularly thin-skinned about flirtations; but there is a point beyond which no gentleman, or indeed no man worthy of the name, ought to go, in my opinion. Hawkins had passed that line, and my friendship for him had received a considerable shake in consequence. Indeed, I felt more interest in Ellen than was my custom, and most sincerely wished her happiness, but she just at this moment looked very wretched.

After the storm came a calm. Nina, as a peace-offering, sang a song, the words of which I had written for Nanny. Mrs. O'Reilly paid me the compliment of in-

quiring my opinion as to some colours matching, of which I knew as much as a middle-aged owl. Nanny and Johnny had a turtle dove skirmish about her not having made him a pair of mufftees; and upon bidding adieu to the charming circle under that tranquil roof, my little champion, Alice, escorted me to the drawing-room door, to protect me against any fresh onslaught on the part of the fairy fury Nina.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLY COLLEGE—THE PHILOSOPHY OF PHRENOLOGY—NATIVE INDUSTRY—THE BLUNDER OF THE BUMPS—THE MAJOR IN HIS CUPS—THE BEGINNING OF THE END—THE GREAT CASE OF DIDO *v.* ÆNEAS IN THE COURT OF COBWEBS—HOW TO PACK A PORTMANTEAU—THE CHILL SHADOW OF PARTING.

UPON reaching the barracks, I perceived that college of cardinals in the mess room was still in full and somewhat noisy conclave. As some one or other might be getting into some scrape or other, I considered it my duty just to look in, with a superintending cigar in my mouth,

and found the usual comfortable confusion attendant upon such military hospitalities.

In one corner was a group of four, enjoying a curious amalgam of whist, grog, and cigars, of which enjoyment I should imagine the two latter ingredients predominated. At least I know that, on looking over their shoulders, I saw a revoke, which passed undetected among the parties principally concerned. In another, a rather entertaining scene occurred.

Young Boyd of ours, of the Boyds of Mount Boyd, in the county of Antrim, wanted to buy a horse of Mr. Theophilus D'Arcy L'Estrange, son and heir of Sir Michael Angelo D'Arcy L'Estrange, baronet, of Plantagenet Castle, in that neighbourhood, &c. &c. &c. &c. Now, my friend Boyd was, as I have above stated, a North of

Ireland man; that is to say, a canny Scot, sharpened by collision with the Celt; and he took it into his head that he might probably get the horse a good deal cheaper by a skilful administration of brandy-and-water to the master, on the principle that the opening of the owner's heart would cause a corresponding laxity in his purse-strings. It was well-intentioned, but the result was not precisely what that astute young gentleman anticipated.

Young L'Estrange had offered to take thirty pounds for the horse before dinner (the horse was worth about twelve, but many buckeens in Ireland make a living by selling horses to the officers, and all try to do so). Well, as the champagne got into his head, it seemed to pet and pamper his organ of self-esteem, and by the time the dessert was put upon the table the value of

everything connected with the house of L'Estrange had risen fifteen or twenty per cent., and among others this spavined jade, to five-and-thirty pounds; the first tumbler of brandy-and-water had raised it further to forty; and when I approached him to see whether I could get any fun out of him, I heard him say, "Law! I *couldn't* take less than fifty for the horse; it would be a sin to give him to you for less than that. I wouldn't have kept him at all meself, if he wasn't worth that; but I never had a horse in my life that wasn't worth twice the money."

I called Boyd off him, for I was afraid he might get troublesome. In those sort of somewhat turbulent entertainments, when a certain rough-and-ready give-and-take good fellowship is essential to keeping the peace, those gentlemen who have extravagant

opinions of their own importance are sure to give trouble. That confounded dignity of theirs is everlastingly taking fire; and as the means employed to extinguish the flames are not always of the gentlest character, disagreeable scenes ensue.

O'Flaherty, our major, was a singular instance of this. He was a perfect father to the youngsters with whom he principally consorted. I suppose, on the principle that made Napoleon keep his marshals at a distance, but study to make himself beloved by the soldiery, the elder officers being too near his equals, not to clash with his self-importance, he gave the boys the best of advice, and what they valued more, as much leave as they pleased; he stuck to them like a lion in their scrapes (blowing them up sky-high, in private, for their own good), and admitted all sorts of familiarity, which

lasted till he had swallowed a certain quantity of wine, or its equivalent, in some of the varieties of alcohol, O'Flaherty's regulation, as we called it; for we all knew when he had swallowed it, by his beginning to pull up unwary youngsters for not addressing or answering him by the predicate "Sir," as is the custom in speaking to field-officers.

I was, however, not allowed to indulge long in speculation, for something particular had happened during my absence; one of the hinges upon which one's military life turns. A letter of readiness for Cork had arrived, and our days in Ballymacrocodile were numbered; I was sorry for it; I was reconciled to the place, and had begun to enjoy it. However, there it was; there was no help for it. So, with my customary foresight, I instantly sent down to Johnny to warn him to make his escape before daylight (for a route cancels all leave), which

he did, and we were parted for the present. I felt quite lonely without him.

Nothing of any account occurred, during the few remaining days of our stay, to disturb the somewhat monotonous stream of life that flows through the sterile valley of country quarters. I shall not chronicle the loves or the hates of Mary Anne O'Malley, nor can I honestly enliven this narrative with a description, which is, I believe, considered stock in anything relating to Ireland, and which a friend of mine, with whom the reader is speedily to make acquaintance, used to term that portentuous game, where both stake all, yet both may lose all,—viz., a duel; for the Boyds had had their lesson. Time, however, went on,—Time, the compensator that tears us from the islands of joy, but wafts us away from the rocks of grief, as my trusty Lieutenant, Ravenswood, would say; and the

evening arrived when our hospitable board was to be spread for the last time in Bally-macrocodile. Everything, as it left the mess-table, was to be packed. The next day we were to fish for ourselves. The Dragoons fed some, others found refuge with the Artillery, who, I may observe with just and honest pride, invited *me* to dine with them, as the only man in barracks who was equal to calculating the area of a parallelogram, and others found a farewell meal with their private friends. I, of course, was to dine at the rectory.

The last day or two in a town always produces a certain *tremblement de cœur* among a large portion of the officers of a regiment. The old hands take it pretty coolly; their flutterings and flounderings are over; their hearts slumber peacefully in lower regions than they occupied in their

hot youth; and the gushings of the gastric juice form their principal excitement—the probable character of the inns on the line of march being the subject of their speculations, unless, perhaps, they have corns. But the young ones are seldom quite indifferent; the heart is fresh and soft in its green state; luckily, also, it is elastic—it possesses a restorative principle in itself, and the scar soon heals; differing but too widely from the festering and gangrened wound that the arrow inflicts in later life. In this case, the first turnpike-keeper is the medical attendant from whom relief is commonly expected; and, I believe, not without good reason.

Most of our youngsters were in some mess or other, unwarned by the appeal to the court of twelve paces, through which alone Beauty Bill had escaped from the

Boyd, as detailed in Hawkins' letter to me in the first chapter of this chronicle. Ensign Hamilton Stuart, feeling, as he told O'Flaherty (who took snuff, as he told him), that a crisis in his destiny had arrived, and that the alternative of everlasting happiness or perpetual misery was before him, and that only; to which O'Flaherty answered, that there was a third alternative, viz., a march to Cork, and officers' quarters in the barracks of that great city—notwithstanding which he persisted in conceiving a virtuous passion for Mary Boyd, and, with a sort of mild lunacy, in imagining that his pay of ninety-five pounds per annum, and an allowance of about as much again, could maintain a wife and family in great ease and dignity—a position from which the young lady's father, naturally enough, dissented.

Simpkins, the tender-hearted, had been completely fascinated with his charmer at first; but was now (the military viper) wondering whether he should find anything he liked at Cork—an aberration from the course of true love, which Mary Anne fully intended should run smooth in her case (and straight and fast into the bargain, all digression with regard to Johnny notwithstanding), that that young lady by no means approved of, informing one of our officers' ladies, on the spot (who perfectly agreed with her, and accurately reported the sentiment to the regiment subsequently), with great spirit and energy, that there was nothing she hated more than a man who could not make up his mind.

She was mistaken in hating poor Simmy upon this ground; he had made up his mind fully—not to “come forward,” as is

the delicate phrase among piscatory matrons, when the fish rises to the bait. Various other matters of the sort clouded the brows of our young warriors, and, I dare say, cast a gloom over more than one of the neighbouring mansions—

“ Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where, perhaps, some beauty lies,
Cynosure of neighbouring eyes.”

It is a pity that it should be so; but if young ladies would learn that the “cynosure of neighbouring eyes” has a permanent position, whilst the pet of the regiment holds hers at a week’s notice, perhaps some few heartaches would be saved. So it was that we sat down to dinner very silently, which silence, arising really from most of us being in low spirits about leaving the place, Ducrow proceeded to amend in his own way.

“On the seventeenth,” said that Waterloo bore, in whose chronology there was but one seventeenth in the history of the world—viz., the 17th of June, 1815—like the sailor’s first of the same month; “on the seventeenth, when we were retiring after the affair at Quatre Bras, where I was wounded—but the fellow from whom I received the wound did not live long to boast of it, as you may suppose—we were not far from Genappe at the time; I had a handkerchief tied round my head, and we were up to our fetlocks in mud—though I did not much mind that, for I had a remarkably powerful black horse, and knew how to handle him—I saw the Duke of Wellington within an ace of being taken prisoner. He was quite in the rear of the army, at the post of honour, as he always was, and, indeed, not very far from us, superintending

the retreat, and the rearmost regiment of cavalry was Belgic, the same regiment that is now called the Guides, but it was dressed exactly like the French Chasseurs of the Imperial Guard, who, as luck would have it, formed the French advanced guard; so that it was almost impossible to distinguish the one from the other, except by their relative positions; and not very easy even so, for the French began to take liberties with the Belgians, and, at last, one half squadron actually got within our line, and to all appearance, formed part of it."

"Was it right or left in front?" asked Simpkins, as if it mattered; but Simmy took great pride in talking about cavalry matters.

"It was left in front," returned Ducrow, as if he knew. "It, however, soon began to hang back, intending to drop unper-

ceived into its own proper place; but the Duke seeing this, and supposing that it was a Belgic body, falling imprudently, and, indeed, dangerously, to the rear, was riding towards it, to warn it of the risk it was running, when he observed it enter a large farm-yard, in which the only entrance was towards the French army; and the old fellow's tact at once warned him that Belgians never would have run the risk of being caught like rats in a trap with so much coolness, and he pulled up. They would have carried him off to a dead certainty, if he had gone near them."

"Did the French get away?" asked Jenkins.

"No," replied the hero; "he brought up an infantry regiment, I believe the 91st, and peppered them properly."

"Served them right," said Jenkins.

This was the first really interesting story about Waterloo that I had ever heard Ducrow tell, and what added to its interest was, that I subsequently discovered that it was substantially correct, which was not always the case; for, like many self-glorifiers, he had a fine liberal way of asserting things which perhaps hardly enhanced his reputation as much as it damaged his credit.

“That reminds me,” said one of the artillery officers, “of the singular manner in which the intelligence of the real and conclusive termination of that day’s work was conveyed to a private house several hours in advance of the government dispatch. Some few days before the action, a smuggler came to the head of one of the great commercial houses, and made a proposition, that

for five hundred pounds, and his expenses paid, he would take such measures as would probably put that house in possession of the result of the great battle, which every one knew to be imminent, in Flanders, several hours earlier than it would be known in any other quarter. Of course, a few hours' prior information of that sort in London, where a man is within a few minutes' walk of the Stock Exchange, is as good as the philosopher's stone. The question was at once entertained, and on being asked what those measures were, he detailed them as follows:—'I will arrange relays of horses,' he said, 'from London to Dover, and from Ostend to the army, to whose head-quarters I will go myself, wait till the battle is over, and probably be able to start from the field several hours before the despatch. At Ostend I will have ready a

remarkably fast six-oared boat, manned with picked men, and at this time of year the sea will probably be calm and the wind westerly, and in that case the row boat will beat the sailing vessel.' Well, as June wore on, things looked gloomy on the Stock Exchange; the account of the Prussian disaster on the 16th reached London, and down went the funds; then came the news that the British army had actually retreated on the 17th, accompanied by all sorts of rumours, and down went the funds again. At last, the decisive battle took place, and our friend the smuggler kept his word; he remained to the last, till he saw the French army in full retreat. His patrons had the news by four o'clock in the morning, which did not reach the War-office till two in the day. They bought a trifle of a million or two of stock on the strength of it."

"The man was right about the wind," said I; "it was westerly."

"Pray how do you happen to know that?" asked Ducrow, his face swelling and reddening. I would have given anything to have had Johnny there then; it would have so delighted him to have seen Ducrow's indignation at anybody so outraging his dignity as to speak of Waterloo with any degree of confidence in his presence. "How did you obtain that knowledge? I do not think that you could have been well out of your nurse's arms at the period of that immortal victory."

"Oh," I replied, "but I know that Colville's men at Hal, which is to the west of Waterloo, could not hear the firing, and that Grouchy at Wavre, to the eastward, heard it very distinctly indeed; whence I deduce that the wind was from the west."

I do not think that Ducrow, presuming

even, and that is a liberal presumption, that he had a clear idea of my premises, was master of logic enough to draw the inevitable conclusion; but he seemed to have a happy consciousness that he was laid upon his back, when young Musgrave joined the conversation.

"Is it your opinion, Cobb, that Napoleon really surprised the Duke on the 16th?"

"No," I replied; "but I think the Duke astonished Napoleon on the 18th."

"Really," said Ducrow, boiling over, "with all due deference, I cannot quite credit the story of the smuggler; *I* heard nothing about it."

I was rather amused at the good man's self-importance; but alas! alas! Ducrow is not the only man upon this inconsistent globe of ours who discredits all that *he* knows nothing about. I had serious

thoughts of entertaining myself and friends with a public view of Ducrow's face whilst I gave the table an account of the charge in which Picton and William Ponsonby were killed,—a sketch of the French order of battle, of which I am convinced I knew much more than Ducrow; for I believe his ideas of a skilful order of battle were zero,—a dash with a free pencil at the entertaining incident that occurred on the extreme left where the Prussians came up—namely, that finding the Nassau troops there, under the Duke of Saxe Weimar, in uniform resembling the French, they pitched into them like prize-fighters, till the unhappy bubblers from the Brunnens might well cry out—“deliver me from my friends,” but contented myself by enlightening the company about how the Prince of Orange got the 69th cut to pieces by insisting on their

forming line in the suspicious neighbourhood of French cavalry, and how the Duke warned old Blucher that he would be beaten on the 16th, from not having his supports close enough at hand, by delicately remarking, that "every general must know his own troops best, but that if *he* had *his* men in such a position he should expect to be beaten;" neither of which circumstances were, I believe, known to Ducrow, who looked as savage as a bear during the narration.

This was the last time I ever set eyes upon that redoubted champion of the British crown. May his shadow never be less! though, as involving a corresponding diminution of substance, it is doubtful whether a falling away might not be an improvement.

I retired early that night to superintend

my packing, for I had some books, and even some prints and music, and was obliged to be careful. There are several modes of military packing. For a portmanteau, cramming it till it has about twice as much as it will hold, and then jumping on it, is not a bad plan; for a strong box, a file of men in heavy marching order standing on it, is generally very efficacious as a gentle mode of pressure; and a carpet bag can be made a great deal of with the assistance of the butt-end of a musket; indeed, everything is squeezable if you only apply sufficient pressure. We had a good number of tubs too, which were fitted with lids, and carried crockery and kettles, &c.; sometimes, perhaps, things were broken, but we went on never minding, so long as we got out of the town with a few pounds in our pockets. The world was a good enough world for us.

Still there is a discomfort in moving.
Truly, Byron says:—

“In leaving even the most unpleasant people,
And places, one keeps looking at the steeple.”

I was by no means leaving an unpleasant place or people. Domiciliated at the rectory, I had a faint glimmering of enjoying a sort of a home, more than I had had for years. I liked running in and out of the house like a tame cat; I liked teaching Nanny and Alice all sorts of wonderful things, more, in truth, than was dreamed of in their philosophy; I liked the good rector, and used to chuckle hugely every now and then at defeating him in a theological argument, which occasionally happened, more I believe by memory than by grace: in short, I was becoming an arrant spooney.

CHAPTER V.

CANDOUR OF THE CONFESSOR—TREMBLING OF THE
TONGUE—THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT—THE DAUGH-
TERS OF THE HORSE-LEECH—MEMORY THE
ACCUSER—THE SKELETON IN EVERY HOUSE—
THE SOCIAL FUNERAL—"THE GIRLS WE LEFT
BEHIND US."

I SUPPOSE, pending the existing mixture of
elements, or phrenological macedoine which
constitutes the human mind, as served out
to those entitled to it in the present era,
no man, other than the hero of a romance,
or a minister of state, or the promoter of a
joint-stock company, ought to shrink from
confessing to mixed motives; at least the

present confessor does not, and freely admits that, in strolling down towards the rectory, on the day after his defeat of Ducrow on the field of Waterloo, he was partly actuated by a desire to escape from the indescribable confusion that reigns in a barrack the day preceding a march; and truly, in such a case, it may be said that it never rains but it pours.

The desire of seeing Ellen, of course, predominated; that is to say, the desire of seeing her with nobody else by, which constitutes the very essence of an interview, and which, of course, could not be looked for in a dinner-party, and yet, after all, the most confidential conversation would not have made me wiser on the subject of her story, nor abler to influence her fate than before; but I believe we have all of us a lurking fancy for talking about any matter

we have in hand, even when we feel we have little chance of carrying our projects into effect, a trick of letting the tongue draw an undated bill upon the hand, even though it is sure to be dishonoured on presentation; as, for instance, when people postpone "talking over" a matter with one, one does not expect there will be much business done.

I never was so pestered with beggars as I was on the way down to the rectory; the bloodsuckers fastened upon the prey about to escape from their grasp, with a tenacity which, I believe, belongs only to limpits and adhesive young ladies; and it seemed as if the plagues of Egypt had swept over Ballymacrocodile the night before, and made the departure of the 120th from that city—the chosen seat of the grisly graces, plague, pestilence, and famine—as memorable

as that of the children of Israel from the land of Mizraim.

If the rivers were not turned to blood, I can speak positively to the dust of the land being smitten, and no mistake; the indigenous cattle (who generally wore rings in their noses) were not more perverse than usual; but every child, first-born or not, had a sore head, wherewith it proposed levying a poll-tax upon us, or a damaged foot, and the boils were so universal, that everybody's flesh seemed quarrelling with its skin.

Widows, the bone of whose bone and flesh of whose flesh had been dust for ten years, well counted, saw the spectral form of the deceased in the receding ranks of the 120th, and renewed the first sorrows of their bereavement with a ghastly freshness. Rank

and luxuriant grew the weeds that were watered by widowed wailings, whilst the swarming orphans were pitiful to behold, and still more pitiful to hear (barring that they were fine stout young men and women of three or four and twenty); in short, the whine of mendicancy rose to a perfect howl, as the chance of getting anything more out of us faded swiftly away. Perhaps something of the sort, on a larger scale, is going on even now. Perhaps the Saxon is beginning to understand it. He has been very long about it:—

“God cannot love, Blunt says, with tearless eyes,
The wretch he starves, and piously denies;
But the good bishop, with a meeker air,
Admits, and leaves them Providence’s care.”

Pope meant that for satire upon uncharitableness; I think, applied to sheer shame-

less, importunate mendicancy, it is good law and better equity.

Who begets hard-heartedness upon disgust?

The importunate beggar.

Who stands between unobtrusive penury and willing charity, well-intentioned, but infirm of purpose?

The importunate beggar.

The tongue is a sharp sword, and great crimes may be committed therewith; but what that comes out of the mouth of man so utterly lowers and debases him, so drags in the mire the inestimable gift of speech, as the whine of the professed mendicant. However, they got little out of me, about as much as they would have got out of the Eddystone lighthouse, if it had happened to pass that way, and I entered the rectory unamerced, and I have no doubt,

according to their views, unmerciful. *Laus Deo!*

As I entered the modest gateway and the tiny tidy lawn, that flung a sort of veil of domesticity over my reverend friend's unpretending porch, memory performed a species of dance—not a dance of death, but a dance of jiltings, before my eyes. It did not blast them, for I myself knew myself guiltless; but I thought of the linnet among the sparrows, and could not but admit that I had spent much of my life in indifferent company.

I bethought me of Frank Hawarth, years ago, and his affair with Mary Launceston, when we were at Exeter; how the poor girl wrote letter after letter, detailing the most minute household circumstances, and how we bullied him about the last brood of ducks, and about little Annie Launceston's

cutting her teeth, for he was very liberal about showing them; what roars of laughter it excited at mess when he read out the account of mamma's catching little Willy stealing eggs, from the circumstance of the perverse egg breaking in that young burglar's pocket (he is a prebend of Exeter now), and how she punished him by interdicting him from dessert time for four days (two of which poor Mary begged off), and the story about the apple-dumpling.

I remembered also the business when Frank, without even the common courtesy, or the common humanity, of condescending to inform Mary that he was going to break off his engagement, proposed for Jane Butts, because, forsooth, he wanted connexion, and she was a baronet's daughter (the Lord have mercy on us!) with two thousand pounds more than Mary, who was then

worth her weight in gold well told, and Jane, the gorgeous, accepted him sheerly and simply for his good looks, for she had not seen him more than six times, and, as he said, squeezed his arm the third time. She might have fallen in love with the gardener on the same grounds. I dare say, by this time, she has found somebody whose looks please her better. I have no great faith in young ladies who fall in love by the eye. That sort of anchorage is bad holding-ground; and I recollected, lax as I was myself at the time in my notions of right and wrong in those matters, how I chuckled when the brother came down, and horsewhipped him. He had to leave the army, certainly, but the saddle on which he rode out of the barrack gate was put on the wrong horse—the regimental conscience revolted at the refusal to commit homicide,

by calling out the brother, not at the consigning a young and trusting heart to a living tomb with a scorpion in it.

All this, however, happened many long years ago, when George the Fourth was king; perhaps the *exemplar Regis* was not without its influence among those who wore his livery. Let us hope a better state of things obtains now.

I remember, however, seeing Mary some years afterwards at a race-ball, fierce, bold-eyed, and reckless, very forward to hounds, as I heard; flirting audaciously, but always with boys, and, I think, repaying with compound interest (I must not say with more, for the usury laws were in fresh force then) her debts to our sex. I thought, as I looked at her, that blushes and she had been long strangers; and as the very thought was passing through my mind, I

caught her eye for the first time. She recognised me, and then from shoulder to forehead, like an outbreak of musketry, came a dark, deep crimson flush, as if a flood of memory, searing and scorching, had overcome her very soul. I knew well why that blood burned in her veins.

Again a darker passage yet rose before my mental vision, of which I alone now of living man know the truth; though many in that dreary northern county marvel yet at the tragedy, that, in all its ghastly mystery, manifested itself suddenly, like a demon phantasmagoria in the midst of them. I remembered the hurried and agonized application for men to search the country at the barracks, the torchlight muster, the awful ravings of the mother, the father manly, yet sorely smitten, the fearful grinding of the keel of the boat as

it put off into the little lake, with the drags on board, and the scene that followed when doubt and hope fled together, and were gone.

Much wonder there was then, and long after, in that neighbourhood, as to what was the sudden cause which drove that fair girl to the frenzy that urged her to that sepulchral lake. There were dark hints about hereditary insanity on the mother's side, and stories how an ancestor had jumped from the upper story of an old manor house; and some said that her home was not happy, for they had seen her eyes red with weeping; but I, who had, as senior officer present on the spot, taken possession of young —— papers and effects, when he was brought home with three quarters of an hour's life in him, from the steeple-chase at Trim, and complied with the last request he ever made to mortal man, to look over

his papers, and burn those that *ought* to be burned, before any of his family saw them—I knew how the demon of trifling brought about that dire tragedy; and I partly then understood a habit which —— —— had of late years adopted, and for which we had often and often quizzed him—that of sleeping with a light in his room. Often have I heard him accused of being afraid of ghosts, with but little idea of how much truth there was in the accusation.

All these things, however long they may read upon paper, passed like a flight of swallows before me as I walked up to the door. There was no one in the drawing-room, and little as I was accustomed to notice such barometrical indications of the settled or unsettled state of the female mind, even I could not help remarking that there reigned less of order and neatness in that

apartment than had been the case when I first arrived. It might have been that the weather was too fine for much tarrying in doors; it might have been that Alice tumbled things more about—she grew perfectly unmanageable whenever I came into the house; it might have been that hope deferred maketh the heart sick—but I observed that the flowers in the vase had not been changed lately—a book which I had seen two days before flagrantly out of its proper place, was so still—and some little nick-nacks, which I had so arranged as to give little Alice a rough idea of how her favourite Nelson had achieved his victory of the Nile, remained in the Nelsonian order of battle, which was by no means the order which would have found favour in the eyes of a lady particular about the neatness of her drawing-room.

Fortune, however, favoured me with the principal object of my visit, for on looking out of the window, I perceived Ellen quite alone, and engaged in cutting some flowers, I suppose to repair the neglect of the last two days. She got confused and nervous when she saw me approach—indeed, of late days, that had often been the case; in fact, she dreaded being alone with me. Whether she feared some communication, or whether it was merely a vague consciousness of my knowing more than she wished any one to know, I could not exactly discover. It is often difficult enough to read a woman's hand (especially when crossed), but he who professes to read a woman's heart (under similar circumstances), *may* be *Œdipus*, but more probably is *Davus*. I confess to being the latter.

On this occasion, as it was obvious that

I *could* not lead the conversation to the subject that occupied both of our thoughts, and she would not, there was little conversation at all. There was the weather, and the morrow's march, many kind regrets at my departure, and hopes of seeing me again at some distant day. I promised to come back again, and, strange to say, intended to do it. Ellen wondered how Alice would ever get over my departure; to which I replied, that I presumed she would console herself after the manner of her sex—a remarkably clever speech of mine under all the circumstances. But I really was losing my head with the perplexity of longing to speak words of comfort, not knowing how, and not daring to trust to a happy audacity which I have sometimes found very effective in dealing with women—in short, I left her exactly as I found her.

When I returned to dinner, Ellen had put on a forced hilarity; Mrs. O'Reilly seemed to consider Cork a most alarming place, and recounted the number of friends they had had in different regiments which had marched from Ballymacrocodile to Cork, proceeded to divers sunny islands of the West, which have served the British army as stepping-stones to another world, from time immemorial, and returned no more. In short, she evidently looked upon Cork as little else than the last stage before arriving at that place, over whose gates is inscribed—"Ye that enter here, leave all hope behind."

The reverend pastor said he was sorry to part with me, and I believed him. I doubt whether the reverend gentleman has to this day encountered such another booted apostle to discourse matters theological, in a fine,

broad, military manner, with him. Nanny looked wistfully at me every now and then, as if she would like to say something to me, but dared not. It came to the same thing, however; I knew perfectly what she meant, and made Johnny write to her the first opportunity I had of communicating with him; and my little pet, Alice, upon her appearance after dinner, simply and silently placed herself beside me, and remained there, holding my hand when she could get it, and when she could not contenting herself with hooking a tiny finger through one of the button holes of my coat. I was rather glad that they were all dull. I was exceedingly out of spirits myself, and anything like gaiety would have jarred upon my feelings. In fact, what are those farewell feasts but social funerals, in which the departed is still sensible of pain?

Once more ere we parted I felt that convulsive grasp of Ellen's hand, that had so often before gone through my conscience into my heart; but captains of infantry, on the eve of a march, have something to attend to besides fine feelings; and my various duties soon occupied me.

I believe there were a great number of leave-takings, of all sorts and sizes, in Ballymacrocodile that night. A great many young ladies had favourable answers on full cock, but nobody pulled the trigger. A reasonable number of parents and guardians expected that young gentlemen would request "a few minutes conversation with them;" but the young gentlemen didn't.

Mrs. O'Howlegan, I have no doubt, declared of the 120th, as she had of every regiment that had preceded them for the last eighteen years, when Arabella came

out, that "they were dirty desavers; they ate your mate, they swalley your punch, they dhrink your tay, and then cut off with them like a pfhluff in the pan."

Juliana MacGillicuddy cantered four times past the barrack gate that evening, and I hope she got safe home; but the world went round still, and the dawn came, and we marched. Our march was uninteresting; I suppose it rained, but do not at this moment recollect, and Cork afforded nothing to chronicle. I have no taste, either for marrow or whiskey, which are the staples of the place. I think the buckeens were, perhaps, a little more outrageous than elsewhere, for the trade of Cork being in agricultural produce, and not manufactures, both enriched the indigenous squireens, and brought them in contact with their city parallels, and the cross seemed to me to

exaggerate the bad qualities of the parents on both sides.

We led a bustling life in barracks; there were regiments constantly embarking and disembarking, all equally to be entertained, and all equally thirsty. Sometimes we sat up all night with the hard heads of some favourite corps to see them march out in the morning. Sometimes, exhausted with our social labours, we were glad to turn in at nine. There was hardly a spot on the face of the globe about which, if required, some one or other out of that motley assemblage of regiments and dépôts, could not have given information, derived from personal knowledge; and there was no spot for which, if required, somebody or other could not have been found ready to start at a moment's notice, on the most moderate terms, or on no terms whatever. It was a

life of comings, goings, dinners, guard mountings, toasts, courts-martials, meetings, and partings, rich military port, cholera, and cigars—a loose, vagabondizing life; not, I should think, very good either for the head or for the heart, and I was by no means sorry when it was over. I was very glad Johnny saw nothing of it, the more so as not being present himself, he could give no account at home of the part I performed therein.

CHAPTER VI.

NATIONAL WEAKNESS—CIVILIZATION OF AFRICA—
CHRISTIAN TRADING — CATCHING A WEASEL
ASLEEP — DODDY THE SMALL — INTERESTING
INFORMATION—THE STRAW THAT SHOWS HOW
THE WIND SETS—FIGURATIVE ROOK SHOOTING—
THE BITER BIT—ORDERS FOR BRISTOL.

THE finest pisantry on the face of the globe have an amazing taste for fire-arms. Not simply an amateur predilection, but a professional vocation. In the days that I speak of, the fire-water, whiskey, divided the empire of their souls with it; but that great anti-spiritual pastor and master, Father Mathew, knocked the quarter-casks on the head, and gave Ireland, body and

soul, over to whatever authority presided over blunderbusses.

It is, indeed, not very long since, among the upper classes, the "smelling powder," *i. e.*, fighting a duel, aptly defined in the admirable "COUNCIL OF FOUR," "Folly playing at murder," was considered an indispensable qualification for the assumption of the toga virilis, and now, among the rustic population, the having an "iligant gun" hid somewhere, is, at one-and-twenty, considered quite as much a necessary of life as a wife. A circumstance occurred whilst we were sojourning among the Corkonians, waiting for orders to embark, that impressed this national predilection most disagreeably on my mind.

A ship, bound for some unpronounceable and incomprehensible river on the African coast, where the sands are gold, and

ivory grows spontaneously, and which, I believe, is frequented by long, low, raking schooners, very fast, and apparently very thirsty, for they ship enormous quantities of water, was wrecked off a place called Ballycotton, where there is an ugly cluster of rocks, and was instantly plundered by the country-people, with many pious thanksgivings to the Providence that had thrown this seasonable godsend upon their poor and suffering coasts.

Part of its cargo consisted of muskets, destined, I suppose—as I am told the mission of commerce is to Christianize and civilize the children of Ham—to precede the arrival of Bishops in Africa, but its destination being altered by a gale of wind, it was now in the act of demoralizing the Barony of Imokilly, and, what was more to the purpose, as far as concerned

me, of causing the 120th Regiment to parade at midnight, to search for the arms.

In the third Canto of "Childe Harold"—the 21st stanza to the 28th, both inclusive—will be found a very good account of troops parading at night. I doubt very much whether I could give a much better one; and, at all events, do not at present intend to clash with Byron, and so refer the reader to the passage above-mentioned. I recollect, however, that we were all as sulky as bears at being thus debarred of our natural rest, and that it rained with a pitiless perversity, as only it rains in the island of Saints, from midnight that night when we got under arms till ten P.M. the following night, at which hour we returned from our travels.

The plan of the campaign was, to drop

down the Lee in small steamers, land parties at different points of the coast before day-light, and scour the country. It was intended that we should steal in the early morning, before people were up, into men's houses—a sort of setting a thief to catch a thief—as if they took their firelocks to bed with them. It sounded very well, as discussed at mess, and looked very well on paper in the orderly books, and read very well in the Cork Thunderbolt and Clonakilty Hurricane; but those who know the kingdom of Cork, can guess the practical results.

I know that I found every honest man in the district I overhauled standing at his own door, with his hands in his breeches pockets, with a hearty welcome for my honour and the least little bit of a chronic wink, ready to show me over his house;

and I must say, that the search effected by the police, whom we protected, was rigid and minute to a degree that even shocked my men's notions of delicacy; but the whole thing reminded me forcibly of the proverb —“When you catch a weasel asleep, you may shave his eyebrows.”

We had not been very long at work, before I remarked that we were followed by a small urchin of a boy, who had attached himself to the party, and seemed inclined to make himself generally useful as well as amusing; and the moment he saw that I noticed his presence, he introduced himself with as little *mauvaise honte* as could be expected from such an unsophisticated child of nature.

“A fine soft mornin’, Captain;” said he, with the customary tug at a stray lock of hair, which I believe is the only trace existing

in that country of taking anything (time included) by the forelock; and indeed, his remark about the softness of the morning was true; there came down an incessant drizzle that made us feel as if we were walking through a light whipped froth, soft enough in itself, but by no means calculated to mollify our tempers.

"What do they call you, my man?" said I, in return to his salutation.

"Doddy O'Toole, your honour," replied he, "is what the boys call me."

"Doddy?" said I, rather puzzled with the name; "I did not know that that was a Christian name."

"Maybe it is not, sir," returned he; "but Deodatus is a mighty Christian name, and that's the name I was christened by."

"Do you belong to these parts?" I asked.

"I did, your honour."

"And why don't you now?" asked I.

"I belong nowhere, sir; father's dead, and mother's dead; kith and kin all dead and gone."

"Where did they live?" asked I.

"Down by Dunmanway, sir."

"And how long is it since you have been there?" demanded I, suddenly calling to mind that the boy might give me some information about Hawkins.

"A couple of days, sir; I came up here to see if I could get a job about the big house at Castle Martyr."

"Do you know Captain Hawkins," I asked, "that commands the detachment of the 110th close there?"

"That commands the army? What would hinder me?" replied the boy, "since I carried his basket for him last Monday,

and he caught as elegant a trout as ever you'd wish to see—five pounds, sir, every ounce of it, or I'll ate it; but he's growing mighty quare of late."

"How do you mean growing queer?" asked I; "what does he say or do?"

"Sure, he does be goin' about, looking as if he thought long," *Anglice*, was homesick, "readin' letters, switchin' the thistles, talkin' to himself, and the like."

"Did you ever hear him say anything to himself?" I inquired.

"Yes I did, sir."

"What did he say?"

"He said, D—n it, sir."

A fine military soliloquy, thought I, almost equal to Shakspeare's—"Adieu valour! rust rapier! be still drum! for your manager is in love—yea, he loveth."

"Bedad, I think so too, sir!" said

Deodatus; for I had been indulging in one of the practices that he had attributed to Hawkins, though hardly for the same cause, viz., thinking aloud. "I don't know what else it would be, only maybe he's in debt."

"Does he know anything about fishing?"

"Faith, he does, sir; but he does not pay much attention to it, just now. You'll see him stick the rod into the bank, and just sit down for an hour like a statute."

"Like Patience on a monument," said I, in a half-whisper to myself.

"Faith, his patience is dead and buried," returned Deodatus; "he's mighty hasty; and sometimes he doesn't know what he wants or where he's goin'; and he'll ate half an apple, and then chuck it away."

"I suppose the people here have plenty of firelocks?" said I.

"Sure, they got them in lashins from the

big ship down at Ballycotton; the country's full of them."

"Do you think we shall find many of them?" I inquired.

"'Deed, I don't," frankly replied the promising youth.

"Why not?"

"Oh, then they're hid away safe enough by this time!" returned the Dieudonné, looking suspiciously at the policeman, and evidently in his own mind drawing a very complete distinction between those who made the search, and me who only protected it.

"What do they want with them?" asked I.

"To shoot the crows, your honour," was the answer; and the boy clearly thought it was quite good enough for a reason.

I do not myself think that much corvicide was committed by the gentle swains

that unloaded the African vessel, unless in the figurative sense in which that word is applied to a clergyman. The arms so acquired seemed to me, however, dangerous only to those who used them, for the barrels were cast, and in some places not thicker than paper. I do not think one of them could have been fired with safety to the firer.

We picked up very few of them, for the country-people never keep arms that are meant for mischief in their houses. They hide them in holes in the bogs, build them up in turf stacks, weave them into the hedge-rows; and, in short, exert every description of ingenuity to baffle those that search for them: and even when they are found there is no means of proving the ownership in a manner which would subject the possessor to penalties. My trophies

consisted of an old yeomanry sword that might have done good service in a battle between the Pigmies and Cranes, but certainly in no encounter on a large scale; and a broken ramrod; and our other divisions picked up little more.

One thing we discovered, that these African traders dealt most extensively in base coin, a quantity of which was found on board, and strangely enough, precisely resembled in shape the golden fibula which are so often found in the bogs in Ireland, and have so puzzled antiquarians. In this case, the fibula was of some base white metal, coppered over to resemble solid copper, for which it was to pass. Possibly, this discovery may throw some light upon that subject, but it does little credit to the morality of Christian trading.

As for us, we ploughed on drearily

through the wet, acquiring much insight into the manners and habits of the indigenous. At one time, I had an idea of writing a history of the domestic economy of the lieges of Cork, but was obliged reluctantly to abandon the project, not being able to discover any traces of such an article. The only incident that enlivened my walk occurred in a house, where it was so dark that we were obliged to use candles in our search, and was highly illustrative of the extraordinary indifference to personal danger which is so marked a characteristic of the British soldier, and in which, indeed, I believe the men of no other nation approach him. One of the men in a dark corner found a barrel, into which he coolly poked the candle he had in his hand, and then triumphantly reported that it was GUNPOWDER.

I stood for a moment staring and open-mouthed: there he was, to all appearance as unmoved and unconscious as a baby, holding the lighted candle with a long straggling wick within a few inches of the powder, enough to have dismissed the whole party to the skies on the wing of a fiery dragon. The next moment, however, a steady old sergeant, quietly taking hold of his hand, withdrew it very gently to a sufficient distance, and then extinguished it. I drew breath again, and felt as if I had just awoke from a nightmare.

On our road back to the steamers, I cross-questioned my new friend Deodatus still further about Hawkins, his manners and habits, and was more and more confirmed in my opinion, that he had hit upon the fate of many others, who, in trifling with the chubby young gentleman with

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turned in her, as I found was indeed much the case on my arrival atacks.

One by one, our parties dropped down to several points of embarkation, and we commenced picking them up, cold, wet, hungry, and tired. As my men were embarking, I perceived Deodatus eyeing the party wistfully, and I have no doubt soliloquizing to himself, after the fashion of the ingenuous Norval, who lived on the Gramscian Hills; and I bethought myself that it was possible that I might find it convenient to gratify his longing "to follow to the field some warlike lord," for I wanted a sort of cross between a tiger and a powder monkey, with a small dash of weasel; and it struck me that Deodatus was about the mark.

"Can you ride?" asked I.

"Ask Captain Hawkins," replied he, his eyes brightening, his cheek flushing and trembling all over with eagerness, for he clearly saw a chance of an opening in life, which, poor fellow, he had seldom seen before.

"Can you clean horses?"

"'Deed I can, sir," said he, "as bright as a new pin."

"Can you tell the truth?"

"Sorra word of a lie ever came out of my lips."

"Can you hold your tongue?"

"Thrust me for that," said he, with an inimitable wink. "Captain, jewel, take me with you."

"Jump on board," said I; which he did, testifying his exultation by throwing a somerset, lighting on his hands, and walking about the deck for some time with his heels up in the air.

How we did enjoy our cold beef and bottled porter! It was now about seven in the evening, and I had touched nothing since dinner-time last night, having also had but two hours' unsettled sleep; and what enormous lies Simpkins told about the resistance he had encountered in the course of his search, from the men, and the admiration he had excited among the women, which he said he was obliged to repress as much as he could, lest the jealousy of the men should break out into open insurrection.

Upon our arrival at barracks, we found orders of readiness for immediate embarkation for Bristol, the steamer which I had observed at Passage having been taken up to convey us. Everything seemed to conspire against my seeing Hawkins: one day I was on duty, another we were ordered to embark, and then countermanded, the

steamer, having got into some awful mess about pistons and cylinders, beams and valves, which the officer in charge of the baggage on board was incompetent to explain, and which I suspect he firmly believed was to end in his being blown up along with the regimental stores, mess-plate, private baggage, and a corporal and six.

What was most provoking of all was, that the day before we actually departed from the shores of Ireland, when the steamer was lying by the quay ready to embark us, I received a note from Hawkins, hurried and flurried, in which he told me that he was too unwell to come to see me, but that he was in great trouble and perplexity, and very anxious to consult me; and begging that I would come and see him.

Most sincerely did I wish that Old Nick himself would personally interfere with the

internal economy of that abominable steamer. How I prayed that the beam would knock the boiler on the head, or the piston make minced meat of the cylinder, or the pipes play the devil's tattoo on the fire-box; but I suppose the refractory engine had undergone a sufficient quantity of hammering and pounding to bring it into order; for in the grey of the morning, when we were forming for embarkation, we heard it roaring and hissing, like a wild beast demanding its prey in its mother tongue, and after the customary military leave-taking, the open column of companies in which we had formed our parade wheeled into line, and in a few minutes more a couple of file, with trailed arms, passing through the barrack gates, announced to the military eye that the 120th regiment was marching on its ship. They were the leading files of the advanced

guard, the support soon followed, as we moved out in accurate military array, as if the Corkonians were likely to arise and oppose our departure; and speedily the slumbering city was saluted by the familiar sounds of "The girls we left behind us."

CHAPTER VII.

THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT OF THE SEA—WAKING DREAMS
—FEARFUL REALITIES—SLEEP AND DEATH—THE
WHISPER OF THE GOOD ANGEL.

At last, we embarked on board of the good steamer, *Grampus*. There was a pretty stiff north-easter blowing at the time, but of course we steamed merrily enough down the Cove of Cork, which was protected by the hill about Castle Martyr from its influence. As we approached Spike, I began to perceive that our voyage was not to be exactly on a lake, there was a good deal of scud and sea on—a pleasant mixture, like opening a bottle of soda water—the white

horses were galloping tremendously, and jumping over the Stags, as they call some rocks just outside the harbour, as if they were mad; a gradually increasing heaving in the vessel seemed to indicate that there was more where that came from; and at last, as we fairly took the open sea, a great lumbering sea struck us on the weather bow, sending its spray clean aft with a hoarse roar and a mocking hiss, the paddle-boxes seemed as if they were playing at see-saw; up went the bows into the air, down went the stern into the sea; then came a sort of motion which I can only describe by saying, that the ship was shrugging its shoulders; I saw every countenance around me change; I felt as if death had put his cold hand down my throat; then, as if he were drawing it up again. Shall I go on—no!

* * * *

I was perfectly astounded at the sea presuming to take such liberties with me—me, who had sailed in every description of vessel, from a hatch-boat to a three-decker; who had always considered myself remarkably ship-shape at Cowes, and a regular old salt at Plymouth,—could call all manner of mysterious ropes, and stays, and lifts, and braces, by their right names—and who, all my life long, had never recollected that unclean spirit, sea-sickness, attempting to enter into me. However, it speedily departed, though there are those who would say that it was succeeded by others worse than itself, for I confess to more brandy-and-water than I choose here to particularize, as these pages may possibly meet Lady Elizabeth Waldgrave's eye; and having so comforted myself, began to laugh at my friends; and, indeed, a very enjoyable sight it was,—

hardly one of them escaped; a live shell would not have produced the effect that that first plunge of the *Grampus* did. Jenkins, in a melancholy attempt to die game, tried a quavering pleasantry.

"Cobb," said he, getting very pale, "if Britannia rules the waves (here the corners of his mouth went down), I wish to heaven (an ominous twitch) she'd rule them straight."

In three minutes more he had abundantly justified the wish.

Simpkins was zigzagging about the deck, endeavouring to reach the companion, which he at last effected, and forthwith buried himself privately below; which, however, did not prevent his afterwards detailing all the adventures, accidents, and occurrences of our voyage to fair listeners in Derbyshire, as if he were the identical

sweet little cherub that sat up aloft to keep watch for the life of poor Jack.

An unhappy youth, from the neighbourhood of Mullingar, who had, I believe, hitherto derived his ideas of water conveyance from the Royal Canal, and the long, small, floating cottages that convey passengers thereon, clung spasmodically to the weather bulwarks, looking wistfully at the companion, but not daring to quit his hold. Had Johnny been on board I should have been busy looking after him, and possibly might have bestowed some care upon some one else; for by this time I was as much at my ease as ever I had been on board my Lord Huddleston's yacht, off the Nab, with his lordship at the helm; but as it was, I looked on for some time in a sort of fiendish triumph. This was not on La Rochefoucault's atrocious, and essentially French,

principle—that there is something not displeasing to us in the misfortunes of our best friends; on the contrary, there were some in whose stead I would even have volunteered to what they call “suffer at sea;” but it was that sort of feeling that, as well as I can recollect, accompanies one’s first pair of boots, or one’s escape from a singular costume which prevailed in my youth, in which the trousers buttoned over the jacket. However, after a time I melted, and helped the unhappy wretch below.

Poor Nugent, he confided to me then and there, that the sea was by no means what he expected; that he had read a great deal of Cooper, and Marryatt, and James’s “Naval History,” and those sort of works, but that there was nothing in any of them about the kind of scene he saw, and what was worse, felt, going on about him on the real sea.

"The sea, the sea, the open sea," as I recollected having heard him sing at mess, a few nights ago, as if he had a great affection for it; but it was clear now, that that fine ancient institution did not improve upon more intimate acquaintance. He further confessed, that, from the language, habits, and manners, attributed by the above-mentioned great authorities to those who make the waves their home, he had expected to find himself penetrated and carried away by a certain sensation of buoyant exhilaration, so exuberant, perhaps, as to degenerate into a jovial ferocity, such as he had read it did sometimes in the case of the pirates—our ancestors, whose Berserkery in battle madness he attributed to the excitement of the sea, and not to their being demoniacal savages; but of which he assured me he found no trace in his present dispo-

sition, but, on the contrary, a certain meekness, not unmixed with a slight desire for a sweet little home of his own, with the girl of his heart, on the banks of the Brosna.

I never before had held much conversation with Nugent, but there was an ingenuous simplicity about him that tickled me hugely; so I took care of him during the greater part of the voyage, gave him brandy-and-water every two hours during the day and night, and told him such stories about shipwrecks and disasters at sea as I thought likely to interest him at the moment. Cases of ships burnt, like that of the Kent East-Indiaman; steamers in the dead of night walking crack through one another; and how, in serious cases of sea-sickness, blood-vessels went whizz, like bottles of soda-water, with digressions to the bursting of boilers and spontaneous combustion.

By the time we had passed Ardmore Head, everything had settled into its proper place —those who were to be sick, were very sick indeed; those who were to be well, were stumping about the deck, or making ostensible attempts at reading in the cabin; and O'Flaherty, who on board ship always divided the day into three equal portions, devoted severally to eating, sleeping, and drinking, had commenced his rotation with the latter.

The weather moderated during the night, though it was still dirty, when, having the morning watch, I came on deck at four o'clock. The sea was tolerably calm, and the deck presented an appearance that could almost have warranted a belief that the time was come for the lion to lie down with the lamb, for it looked as if the whole body of troops that had embarked in the morning

had been transformed into sheep at night as they covered the deck, each man rolled up in a ball, and wrapped up in a blanket. I now remarked, what I have often remarked before and after, the indifferent look-out kept on board merchant steamers. There was certainly the man at the wheel, but even he sometimes seemed to me to rest suspiciously against his important charge; there was another man by him, but he was sitting down, and I have no doubt fast asleep; but there was not a single creature on the bridge, nor, as far as I could see, any look-out kept forward at all.

The fresh air was inspiriting after the close and somewhat vitiated atmosphere of the cabin (I hate damaged air), so for some time I paced up and down, wondering what part of England we should be ordered to, how Johnny was getting on, whether the last

London season had at all spoiled Edith, as it might perhaps, for, of course, she had been very much admired, but I hoped not; picturing to myself the family group at Beauchamp Hall, myself, of course, included (as a *partie carré*); speculating whether I should ever command a regiment, and whether it was not better to play for nothing than work for nothing; then picturing myself to myself sitting under my own vine and my own fig-tree, with *somebody* opening the tea-chest—in short, erecting and furnishing those edifices in the air in which we pass some of the pleasantest moments of our existence upon the earth, free of rent and taxes, and, of course, paying little or no attention to what was passing around us, when my reverie was interrupted by a crash, and a yell, and a sudden shock that almost threw me off my legs.

In a moment all was uproar; with one simultaneous roar every man on board sprang to his feet, startled and confused as men are when suddenly awoke. Some declared we had struck on a rock and were sinking; some said we had been struck with lightning; whilst others averred that they smelt fire; and some talked wildly about the enemy, as if the first idea that had presented itself to their scattered senses was that we were going into action; some, again, begun swarming up the rigging, and I thought the boats would have been torn clean out of the davits from the crowds that jumped into them, and whose obstinacy about leaving them occasioned a very serious delay in lowering them.

I soon discovered the cause, for hearing a crash under the starboard paddle-wheel, I looked over the side, and the black hull of

a sinking cutter gave melancholy proof of the negligence of the people of the steamer. The wheels were immediately reversed, and boats lowered as fast as they could be cleared of the soldiers, but not one solitary individual of those on board that unhappy cutter was saved, nor could any trace of her be discovered. She must have gone down all standing in two or three minutes after we struck her, carrying down with her every single article on board, for nothing of the most trifling description was found whereby she might be identified, and I do not to this day know what she was, or where she came from, but I know that the man at the helm of the steamer ought to have been transported, the captain reminded of his responsibilities by a two years' tread-mill, and the steamer forfeited to the crown. Whereas, in the absence of

bodies to hold inquests on, no judicial proceedings were taken against the offenders; and there being no evidence to show whose or what she was, no action could be brought against the steamer, and all the culpable parties escaped scot free.

After about half an hour's delay, the search, manifestly fruitless, was abandoned, and once more, as if nothing had happened to horrify all on board, the huge hump-backed monster began again ploughing her way through the flashing water, and I found Nugent again at my elbow, looking the very picture of dismay. He had tumbled up the hatchway at the first roar and disturbance that broke out on deck when the accident happened, which he, of course, not knowing the cause of it, connected instinctively with some imminent personal danger to ourselves; and when he

came cowering up to me, his teeth chattering, his whole frame shivering, pale and bewildered, alike from cold, alarm, and seasickness, the very sight of him, oddly enough, drove the accident completely out of my mind; and the only image I could distinctly form was a vision of Nugent in command of the regiment in line, and French cavalry, about a couple of hundred yards off, coming on at a long trot; what he would do, whether he would have sense enough to form square in time, or piously leave the matter in the hands of Providence, were the speculations that immediately superseded in my mind all thoughts of the sunk cutter, and I have not quite made up my mind on the subject yet.

He was a striking instance, and, indeed, victim of a mistaken profession. I have no doubt he would have made an excellent

clergyman, but his mother (who, I understood, was a very correct and high-pressure orthodox woman,) was a knight's daughter, and thought the Church low; and having educated him with great care at home, bestowing the utmost attention upon his character and conduct, sent him to the regiment with a great deal of good advice, and an extensive stock of morality, which, I believe, he was in a fair way of disposing of with the least possible delay.

When he first joined the regiment, "strong in innocence as in triple mail," he used to wear great woollen things round his throat, to protect his lungs, or keep his teeth warm—a sort of patent safety-lid to his chest. He had a pair of clogs, six night-shirts, a hat-brush, and a great deal of arrow-root; and our wild young fellows told me, that whenever they endeavoured to

converse with him about their pursuits—sporting, flirting, hunting, racing, or other devilments, in which they took delight—they found the conversation insensibly changing under their hands, like the dissolving views, and, before long, it had somehow shifted from the Ballinamuck steeple-chace to Exeter Hall.

He did his duty, however, conscientiously, and was never late for parade; though I do not think he would have signalized himself for energy and resource in escorting a long convoy over rough country, in the presence of an enemy, or would have exhibited any very striking vivacity in the dash at a breach; but he went to church regularly twice every Sunday, objected, on principle, to a sort of whist they used to play at, thought betting and, I believe, waltzing, wrong, had tea at nine

shall open, the sea also shall render up its dead; and then, too, the grave suggests but single ghosts, but the sea its sheeted myriads, rising at once here and there, far and near, or far as the eye can reach, its glassy surface bristling with the beings of another life. I do not know whence or why it comes, but still I always find a reverential feeling in the sea, whether in the dead calm, when the crystal expanse lies in its stilly silence gleaming like liquid gold, and the stately war-ships slumber on their shadows, as if they were never more to awake, and put forth their strength or their endurance to wrestle with the winds and the waves, or put forth their armed might with their arguments of iron and voice of thunder, that all nations understand—or in its angrier moments, when I

"Gaze on the glories of the boundless ocean,
Its tremulous mountains glimmering in green
light,
Shifting and shattering in incessant motion,
Their glittering summits clad in ghastly white."

This unfortunate accident produced in me thoughts more serious than I was, perhaps, accustomed to; I pictured to myself the sufferers, roused from sleep to meet death—the horror of the moment—no time for thought or prayer, not one second—nothing but the terrible shock—the hoarse crash of the collision—the rush of the waves into their living tomb—and then ETERNITY.

I could not but feel how horrible this was; how little fitted I was myself to meet such a fate. I thought of what I was, and what I might have been; I thought of time wasted, warnings disregarded, opportunities

flung recklessly away. I knew that I had good abilities, good education, more means than fall to the lot of most country clergymen, and a certain influence over a considerable number of people, yet what good had I ever done to any one? What performance could I point to? of what year of my life could I say, with truth, that it was well spent? or what rational excuse could I give for being the homeless, aimless, useless vagrant that I was?

I knew that, to the mind of a drowning man, a phantasmal representation, the foreshadowing of that memory in the life to come, that we may almost imagine is to grasp eternity and infinity, presents at that dread moment of time, as he steps on the threshold of the YONDER world, with a terrible distinctness, the history of his life HERE. Every act, every thought, all that we have

done which we ought not to have done, and all that we have left undone that we ought to have done, when all are irrevocable, are all accusers; and I thought how should I face such an ordeal, and how a stained and soiled wretch like me could venture to hope for the love of so pure, and good, and bright a creature as Edith Waldgrave, or presume to imagine that I was equal to insuring her happiness.

I believe there are times when our good angel does whisper in our ears, and that it is best that the heart should be saddened and subdued, if not with sorrow, at least with that, which ought to be the deepest sorrow, the sense of our own unworthiness. I felt then so depressed that it was with a heavy heart I walked the deck as we entered the Bristol Channel; yet I have often thought since that I derived much benefit from those

reflections, though, perhaps, even that result was hardly adequate to the expenditure in producing it—viz., a cutter with all hands on board.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INVISIBLE HAND SWEEPING OVER THE HEART-
STRINGS—LETTER-WRITING ON SCIENTIFIC PRIN-
CIPLES—MIRACULOUS CONVERSION OF BEEF—
APPOINTMENT OF A HENCHMAN—CHANGE OF
LONGITUDE—REGIMENT ON THE MARCH—DEVIL-
MAY-CAREISHNESS—ENSIGNS AT PLAY.

WE disembarked in due time at Bristol, but our stay in the city of the sugar hogsheads was but limited; and we did not remain long enough to ascertain how much of the riches of that emporium of commerce arose from the slave trade, or to dive

into the statistics of kidnapping, for we found routes lying for us at the post-office. We had expected to have been pleasantly employed in South Wales, warbling—

“Meet me by moonlight alone,”

to Rebecca and her daughters, or perhaps nearer Worcester or Birmingham; but there had been disturbances further north, —there had been convulsions in the bowels of the earth. The miners had been troublesome, the mayor of Derby had had his windows broken, and been called very ugly names by a mob of defenders of the rights of labour and civil and religious liberty all over the globe, and it was our destiny to pacify that district of calcareous spar that is watered by the Trent and the Derwent.

I suppose that the terror of our name effected that desirable consummation, that the very appearance of Brown Bess pacified Blue John, without her addressing him in that peculiar and emphatic language of hers, which is so well understood everywhere, for I never saw or heard of any disturbance. Head-quarters were to be at Derby, but I found that I was to go to a village, the name of which was as yet unknown to me, but which I was credibly informed was farther north. According to my custom, I appealed to the map, and was not long in finding its exact whereabouts, as also what gentlemen's places were in the neighbourhood.

As I did so, a most unaccountable tremor came over me; the map fell from my

hands, of which I was exceedingly ashamed, and immediately picked it up again, remarking, for the edification of my comrades, that that intolerable ship brandy was enough to shake any nerves; and then, under pretence of visiting my billets, walked out into the street.

The fact was, that the desire for fresh air, freedom of motion, and, above all, the craving to be alone, became an uncontrollable passion. I felt as I walked into the open air, that my colour was coming and going, and a strange sort of sinking about the region of the chest, a certain flutter of thought, strongly contrasting with my habitual immobility—and altogether a sort of all-overishness that, I may do myself the justice to say, was by no means an ordi-

nary weakness of mine. I suppose it *was* that tumbler of stiff brandy-and-water that I had had the morning before; but, the fresh air and a few minutes to myself, soon put me to rights again, and I then be-thought myself that, as my glance at the map had informed me that the village of Carlton, which I was to hold for the Crown, against all enemies whatever, was within a couple of miles of Beauchamp Hall, I might as well write, and let Johnny know that I was coming.

I have always found during life, that, having once resolved upon doing a thing, the wisest plan of all is to do it *instantly*. This, gentle and intelligent reader, is not intended to be one of those dreary distiches that are impressed upon youthful minds in

the transition stage between pothooks and hangers, and real though semideveloped, big *I* and little *u*, but a remark that I have made, that, when you have decided on a course of action, the very moment of decision is the very best to carry it into effect, because the mind, under the influence of recent consideration of the subject, is in precisely the state most favourable to carry out the intention of the decision in all its completeness. A few hours, and we find that the best memory has a dash of the sieve in it. I accordingly returned immediately, and wrote as follows:

“MY DEAR JOHNNY,—

“I am happy to find that we are to be quartered in your immediate neighbour-

hood, where we shall arrive in about a week or ten days. I am glad for your sake it is so; for now that your leave is nearly out, it will be a great point for you to be able to escape occasionally from the ill-disguised savage life of the barrack, into the gentler dominions of civilization and *home*. I hope your health is thoroughly established, and only regret that it was not from a Russian or French bullet that you received the 'baptême du feu.' I have no taste for civil war. I found you had forgotten a sum of 18s. 6d. due to Mrs. Houligan, which I paid, to the great inward satisfaction of that good lady, who thereupon destroyed a letter which she had constructed on the subject, addressed to 'Field Marshal, the Duke of Wellington, Bart.,

&c.,' and which I suppose would have elicited that great man's customary reply to such communications—viz.

'F. M. THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON DOES NOT COLLECT MRS. HOULIGAN'S DEBTS.'

"I left our friends the O'Reilly's in excellent health. They all express the greatest anxiety for your welfare. Write to Nanny and let her know how you are getting on; it will please her very much, and I am sure she has a good title to have efforts made to please her; so you write directly, as I have promised that I will write as soon as I am fairly established in my new quarters.

"Yours sincerely,

"SOMERSET CAVENDISH COBB.

"Give my best regards to Lady Elizabeth and your sister, and tell them how much I

look forward to the pleasure of seeing them again."

I read this letter over once or twice, and having satisfied myself that it would please Edith (which was the *intention* in writing it), posted it; and, returning to the sphere of a captain of Foot, began, a Pegasus in harness, visiting my billets, adjudicating upon the exact amount of meat, vegetables, pepper, and vinegar, that constitutes a comfortable hot meal, as prescribed by a certain clause in the Mutiny Act, to be furnished by the publican for the sum of ten pence, therein provided to be paid to him, as the compensation for receiving the soldier on billet.

I believe some secret alchemical process commonly converts the major part of the

above recited comestibles into spirits, but of course did not *see* any instances of any such volatilization—there is a time to be blind, as well knew Nelson and I; but as I was ploughing heavily through that part of my duty, I suddenly stumbled upon my young friend Deodatus, whom I had pretty nearly forgotten. Doddy tugged at his forelock with a grin, and something more; he seemed really glad to see me, which happiness I suppose he had not experienced since we landed. He had coiled himself somewhere out of the way on board, landed with the troops, and been wandering about the streets, having eaten nothing for I do not know how many hours. I gave him his swing at the first cookshop, and the onslaught he made upon a class of viands which,

humble as they were, exceeded his wildest gastronomic visions, was perfectly delicious. I watched him for about twenty minutes, by which time the pace moderated, and I took him to a slop shop, and rigged him in a sort of helper's dress, resolving to take him upon my establishment.

I have often found an Irish lad in England a very valuable henchman. There is still lurking in the nature of the animal a sort of rough feudal or clannish fidelity, which, checked and crushed at home by the priest and his myrmidons, develops itself in full force when he finds himself alone with his master, in the middle of the Saxons, of which cool and energetic race, notwithstanding all the bluster and bragging that Hibernian orators indulge in in public, every Celt

entertains a secret and instinctive dread; and Pat, the child-minded, isolated among the English, is like a well-conditioned child, in a well-ordered family, cheerful, willing, faithful, and industrious,—all the better qualities in the course of development, most of the worse ones in the course of repression. Pat, rampant on Slievenaman we need not describe; but those who wish to see that grotesque melodrama perpetuated have nothing to do but to pay the priests, and their children's children will not see the end of it, unless perhaps it modulate prematurely into tragedy. If the statesmen of England would condescend to study the theory of races, it might perhaps assist them in the government of an empire upon which the sun never sets.

Having thus clothed Doddy, I considered myself justified in ordering him to wash his face and hands, which he did instantly, under the nearest pump; and I must do him the justice to say, that I never again had occasion to repeat the order. I then rigorously eyed him from head to foot, and with a most significant, but somewhat menacing look, addressed him in the ominous formula—

“Now! MIND!!”

“Bedad I will, yer honour, till the day of judgment, and the day after,” replied my new retainer, with an intelligent look, and a sort of respectful wink, which could only have been executed by Celtic eyelids. “Never fear me—you’ll see, sir;” and I strode away to visit four of my men at the

stage-coach. There is nothing remarkable in meeting a stage-coach, but there is something truly remarkable in the manner in which a British regiment meets one. I know nothing that gives a more complete idea of the dogged imperturbability to the presence of danger, which, I believe, distinguishes our men from the soldier of any other nation, and, of course, every now and then, produces startling and unlooked for results in warfare, than that simple, homely occurrence of a British regiment on the march encountering a stage-coach on the road. On comes the coach, at the rate of ten miles an hour, the horses laying themselves well to their work, the guard blowing the horn (to little purpose), the coachman has not an idea of pulling-up, nor does it

occur to the soldiers to stop; not that they have the slightest thought, or military domination, or privilege; they do not for a moment imagine that the coach is to yield to them, as foreign troops might be supposed to do, but still they go plodding recklessly onwards, and the united efforts of all the officers, who shout themselves hoarse in the attempt, can barely persuade them to open out to the right and left, to save themselves from being run over.

It is not that they are stupid; they see the danger plain enough, but they *do not care for it*. The presence of peril, here as elsewhere, does not produce fear. I incline to think, that had it been Napoleon's fortune to witness a few of these every-day road-side scenes, his celebrated exclamation

on the morning of the day that trampled his star into the blood and dust, whence it rose no more, would have been somewhat modified. The exulting "*Enfin, je les tiens ces Anglais,*" would have been tempered by the shadow of Foy's ominous warning: "*Le Fantassin Anglais en duel est le diable.*" Foy was right. His estimate of that fearful infantry and their terrible silence, was justified by the result. Gallantly enough the French army advanced that morning, stoutly fought they during that day, but something particular happened before evening, and the Emperor exulted no more for ever. Peace be to his ashes!

Both men and officers were in high spirits as we trudged gaily along. "I'll tell you what it is, Cobb," said Jenkins to me,

with an expression of great satisfaction, "I like a real bed when I'm sleepy, and a chance of dry clothes when I'm wet. I like a comfortable well-dressed bit of beef when I'm hungry, and something to drink, that isn't poison, when I'm thirsty. I like seeing the waiters sober, and the chambermaids in shoes and stockings, and that's what I haven't seen these four years."

I confess I agreed with Jenkins, when we halted opposite a neat homely-looking village inn—I forget the name of the place—where we were to pass the night; and when I took a sidling glance at the bar, as I passed in to choose my quarters, and was struck with the trimness of everything there, and how well it was found, and contrasted it with the chaos of jugs, lemons,

novels, pipes, cracked decanters, loose pack-thread, and dirty glasses, one and all smelling of whiskey, to which I had been accustomed in the Emerald Isle; and I remarked that I changed my boots naturally for dinner, a thing I had never dreamed of in Ireland, as if the very atmosphere of England had altered my habits at once, introducing a certain Saxon precision in lieu of the recklessness that grows indigenously in Celtic soil. I speedily remarked another effect that it had upon our youngsters—viz., that it made them mischievous as monkeys. The fact seemed to be, that mischief requires *something respectable* to persecute, and it had not much room for development in that direction in the quarters we had lately occupied.

You cannot astonish a man whose breeches are unbuttoned at the knees, or surprise a woman who has not got a pair of shoes to her feet; you cannot borrow a knocker from a door that has not got one, and is not quite a door; nor spread unwonted dismay and confusion through a house where the pigs roam about at will. Now, in a trim, neat, orderly English village, where a couple of cabbages missing make a sensation, and a pig absent without leave would rouse the *posse comitatus*, bring tears to the young women's eyes, and all the spectacles in the place to all the old women's noses, it pays taking some trouble with the natives, whose astonishment is the reward of superior intelligence.

CHAPTER IX.

REMARKABLE FORBEARANCE OF THE CONFESSOR—
COMPOSITION OF HISTORY—CHARM OF CIVILI-
ZATION—ROMANTIC SUBALTERN—SHAKSPEARE
WORSHIP—WORSHIPPER OF NOTHING—RAILWAYS
IN EPIGRAM—HOME FOR THE TIME BEING.

I HAVE a great mind to give the reader an account of the topography, history, and antiquities of Gloucestershire, but have some doubts as to the result likely to be produced thereby. I know that I informed O'Flaherty that its area was about eight hundred thousand acres, with a population of nearly four hundred thousand souls, to

which he answered by consigning the souls to a place of evil repute, and notifying to me that, for the acres he did not care one d—n, as they did not belong to him.

I partly believed him; but judging that any further communication of statistical information to him would be a mere casting of pearls before swine, with a possibility of the corresponding result, I was thenceforth silent on the subject; a discretion which I shall continue to practise, though I could, if I pleased, repeat a most wonderful narration with which the waiter of the Blue Boar, where we were billeted, regaled me, and in which Britons, Romans, Saxons, Normans, Danes, Welsh, and Irish, performed a sort of kaleidoscope of history that would have astonished Hume uncommonly; but any one who wishes to hear

that stunning history, may easily persuade the aforesaid Bill, of the Blue Boar, to recite it, much garnished and improved by some additional well-constructed incidents which I composed and invented on the spot, including some particulars of the treatment Boadicea received from the Romans, and the secret history of the real attraction that drew Alfred to the neatherd's cottage, on the renowned occasion when he got that immortal scolding for not attending to the toast, and what he was thinking of when he let it burn. I presented him with a copy of those celebrated lines about his godmother (not his wife's mother), of whom it is said and sung—

"His godemether ofte smal gyftes to him she
kindly toke,
Vor to leve other plé, and loke ypon his boke."

Which book, I informed the waiter, was on the subject of the procession of the equinoxes, and had been much used by the Earl of Rosse in the construction of his gigantic telescope, which I described as an agreeable circular saloon, with stars apparently hanging about it instead of lamps. I was glad to be able to give that waiter some historical information. I am certain he has made good use of it; but I hope he tells the story of Boadicea with due propriety, for the discourse which I engrafted on the text—

“ When the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought with an indignant mein,
Counsel of her country's gods,”

required delicate handling.

I always wondered why people make such

a fuss about writing history; *I* find no difficulty at all in that sort of composition, nor, I should imagine, does Macaulay or James, or any other of the eminent historians, my brothers.

The good people of this retired village seemed unaccustomed to troops. I think, if we had wanted men, we might have picked up a few promising recruits here, so decided was the sensation produced by the red-coats. I never saw a greater number of country gudgeons ready to rise at the scarlet bait. They said no regiment had marched through for twelve years, and perhaps they do not desire to see another for the same period; for the exhilaration arising from being not only on English ground, but actually in sight of his native capriferous

hills, seduced that mad wag, Jenkins, into tying one of the baggage-waggons to the posts which supported one of the booths in the market-place, and, upon the horses which drew that precious freight being directed to proceed by the innocent Gloucestershire waggoner, in their common language, an alarming smash occurred among some crockery, and I have no doubt that we are regarded to this day, in that mild retreat of the descendants of the Dobani, in much the same point of view as the Germans regard the Huns, or the Irish the Danes—viz., as the fathers of all mischief.

We marched for several days through a country which, to our eyes, displayed fresh beauties every turn of the road; so gladly does the eye turn from neglect and impro-

vidence to cultivation and civilization. I have remarked the same feeling of relief when returning from the long, dreary, sandy plains of Prussia, and entering that garden of England, Kent. But few incidents enlivened our march, yet it was a pleasant life, and not without interest.

Fresh scenes, fresh faces, fresh towns, and fresh country kept up a sort of freshness almost boyish in our spirits; and the contrast with the country we had so recently left, made every cottager appear in our eyes an independent country gentleman of small but competent fortune, who preferred wearing a smock frock to a coat, thought ploughing a safer remedy for gout than colchicum, and found that beer agreed with him better than wine. Nugent showed some

sport as we marched through Stratford; he grew romantic and Shakspearian, wanted to kiss the gate of the churchyard, and was very near buying an old broomstick warranted — that Stratford particular mulberry. He likewise recited a passage which he affirmed was out of Shakspeare, and which he wrote down for me at my particular request, as I alleged I was very much struck with it. Here it is:—

“ Let Fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
 Live registered upon our brazen tombs,
 And then grace us in the disgrace of death,
 Where, spite of cormorant, devouring Time,
 The endeavour of the present breath may buy
 The honour that shall bate his scythe's keen edge,
 And make us heirs of all eternity.”

I had the pleasure of pointing out to him another species of fame at Coventry, which

seems quite as likely to be eternal as that of the Swan of Avon, viz., that of Peeping Tom; upon which he waxed warm, and called me a Goth, to which I answered with some remark about the ordinary relation between Goth and Celt, which almost drove that mild standard-bearer into a passion, for he was infected, or thought it necessary to pretend to be so, with that singular Hibernomania that has lately been raging in the Island of Saints—the ludicrous part of the business being, that this ultro-Celt had not, to the best of my belief, a single drop of true Celtic blood in his veins.

At Coventry, my other subaltern, Ravenswood, joined us in the march, from leave of absence, considerably prolonged by a tedious, and I understood dangerous

illness. He looked a good deal pulled down, but seemed little inclined to be communicative about his disasters ; and as we drew northward, the column gradually diminished, as company after company diverged in the direction of their several quarters ; and after passing Derby, the Light Company proceeded alone into the heart of the kingdom of Mercia.

The second day brought us to our destination, Carlton, a straggling village, secluded, but somewhat picturesquely seated upon a little prattling brook, which I was informed swarmed with trout, a piece of information which did not interest me as much as it did my gallant lieutenant, seeing that my idea throughout life about fishing had been the old definition of a line with a

fish at one end, and a fool at another; whereas, Ravenswood, who was an incurable day dreamer, would pass whole hours musing, and mooning, and angling, for trout.

I do not believe his success was at all proportionate to the time he devoted to it; for I firmly believe that half the time that he seemed occupied in inveigling the fish into his basket, he was really absorbed in deluding himself into a belief that he was about to make the world's foundation tremble, re-construct society upon a sound basis, and work municipal miracles by some new variety of mayor and alderman. He was an ardent supporter of animal magnetism, and firmly believed that under favourable circumstances you might be able to tell

what the Emperor of China was thinking about, or whether the Queen of Otaheite had a toothache, or such a thing as a petticoat.

He believed implicitly in phrenology, and was accustomed to judge by the eye, and made the most awful blunders in consequence. Luckily for him, he had no capital to dispose of, or he would have believed in provisional committee-men too, a species of faith that by no means makes whole, and formerly I think his belief stopped here. He had a dislike to beginning anything on a Friday, which was about the extent of his religion. When he went on leave, something, as it afterwards turned out, had occurred, which in some degree altered his views, and I think cleared his eyesight.

Ravenswood had a high sense of honour which did duty for principle, and a sort of instinctive perception of right and wrong which served him for conscience. I do not think I remember his having ever acted, in my opinion, improperly, or having ever, in my opinion, assigned a proper reason for any action of his. He was, however, as a companion, invaluable, had sufficient general acquirements to make him "au fait" upon most subjects, and a quaint epigrammatic mode of expressing himself, which I have hardly ever met with before or since.

"There goes fire and water in harness, dragging civilization," said he, one day as we approached a railway, and a train, with a fierce shriek, and a rush, and a roar, hurtled past. "There goes time, buying

space at half-price, and the paradox that compresses the more, the more it expands."

"There," said he, pointing to the electric telegraph, then but partially introduced, "there are the conductors of the lightnings of the mind. Mark my words, Cobb; before long, those wires will be the communicants of the human mind, over the whole surface; as in our bodies there are analogous filaments that connect the whole, in a few years you will see those wires vibrating over the surface of the globe, and conveying facts, words, will, and truth, wherever they reach the nerves of the nations."

"Of which the rails are the bones, and the engines the sinews, and the carriages the muscles," added I.

"The furnace the heart,—the seat of

vital heat, the assimilator of carbonaceous food," rejoined he; "yet no tender heart, but a black one."

"A heart of stone, yet soon kindled," quoth I, catching the tone, I suppose, through animal magnetism, which Ravenswood would, I make no doubt, have made oath was the fact, "that is dug out of the bowels of the earth, that from the heart of the fire it may send the breath of the water forth into the air."

"True, most eloquent of captains of Foot," replied he. "A railway is the race course of the human mind, where science rides the elements against time and skill, the true philosopher's stone turns speed into money, or anything else you like. You may talk of men beating their swords into plough-

shares, and their spears into reaping hooks, but there was nothing about rails at seventy-five pounds to the yard lineal in that gentleman's philosophy."

"Wait a bit," said I; "the terms ploughshares and reaping hooks are merely emblematical of assistants to agriculture; and, before the game is played out, you will see the most powerful ally that agriculture ever had will be the steam engine and the railway, if you believe that cheapness of labour, rapidity of action, accuracy of execution, punctuality of movement, and facility of transport, are elements of agricultural production."

"Remarkably fine words, those," returned Ravenswood; "I wonder would the British farmer in general understand a syllable of them?"

“Rely upon it,” I answered, “he will understand the advantage of being able to send fifty miles to market as easily as he now can ten; and when the railways have pretty well opened up the passenger and goods traffic, and begin to condescend to send cheap tramways into the farming districts to pick up agricultural produce, carry manure from the towns to the very spots where it is wanted, and do those sort of things, you will find that the rail will speed the plough.”

“Ah, yes; speed the plough,” said he; “the plough, the bill that man draws on the earth in spring to be cashed in autumn; the tincture of steel, that mother earth takes yearly as a tonic; the knock at the door, to which she rarely answers not at home.


Well, we may live to see the day that the fire ploughs our fields; we make the lightning carry our messages, and the sun take our portraits, and we are on the point of making the water light our streets."

"Well, we are near home," remarked I; for at this moment we came in sight of the village of Carlton, and, to say truth, I was not sorry to see it. "I realized," as brother Jonathan would say, "that I was actually settled." Here I am, thought I. A thought generally true enough, but it is not always true that there is *somebody* else within a couple of miles, that one thinks almost as much about as one does of the universal idol—self. Self, as Ravenswood once defined it, the centre of every man's "soular" system—the key-note to the ballad of life.

CHAPTER X.

A NEW SCENE ABOUT TO OPEN—THE RISING OF THE
CURTAIN—BEHOLD!—THE LIGHT UPON THE PATH
—THE VALUE OF A GOOD START—TWO HEARTS
IN ONE BREAST—THE BOY'S MOTHER—THE
GENERAL'S WIDOW.

It was about two o'clock the next day that I rode slowly, very slowly, up an ancient avenue, whose great gnarled oaks, rough as the rock-girt scene in which they grew into all manner of shapes, and knots, and crannies, must have looked down, as already giants, on the unfortunate Charles Edward and his unruly array, the day before he faltered and fell.



Slowly I passed a little half-savage wood, from whose recesses came blithe sounds that spoke of nutting; and slowly I rode up to the picturesque but comfortable porch of a manor house, whose quaint gables, fantastic pinnacles, and curious mixture of stone and brick, announced its date as of the times of Elizabeth, and for a moment sat on my horse admiring it.

There is something in the architecture of the Tudors that always attracts my eye. The castellated mansion of the Norman is magnificent indeed, but it speaks too much of the gauntlet, when every man's hand was against his neighbour; the Tudor style speaks more of an era when every man's hand is for all, and the sword for the few has yielded to the law for the many. Its

As I stepped out on the lawn it was turned towards me with that expression that was so peculiar to her, and of which I should in vain endeavour to convey an idea; there beamed such an amiable loftiness or lofty amiableness; my glance met those eyes so serious, deep, and confiding, and I felt a thick, choking throbbing that half throttled me, as I saw a flush of honest, hearty joy at recognising me in the countenance of Edith Waldgrave.

She instantly put down her book and came forward to greet me, stopping for a moment to gather a few flowers, with which, after cordially shaking me by the hand, she decorated my button-hole. I hope the language of flowers has not been communicated to that particular group of fuschia,

mignonette, &c., if it has, strange and too many incredible stories might be heard of a man—otherwise supposed strongminded and unimpressible—making a remarkable fool of himself, upon many private and secret occasions. I have got them still.

She was full of Johnny, and of Johnny's reports about me—how that young rogue had told her that Mrs. Major O'Flaherty had said that Captain Cobb and her Major were the two finest gentlemen in the regiment; and that when she was flanked by them she felt like the Queen's Arms, with the lion on one side and the unicorn on the other; though, which of us she armed with claws and teeth and which with the horn, I never discovered, and she kept it to herself. He had described to her our en-

and been so little corrupted by it (it struck me at the moment, that I should not object to extending my valuable guidance to another of the family). Johnny has really an excellent heart, and no mean abilities; but I think, if he has a fault, he is too impulsive."

"So I have remarked," replied I; "but Johnny has eyes in his head, and if impulse does lead him into a blunder, he does not make it a second time; besides which, he listens to advice."

"And is grateful for it," rejoined her ladyship; "he has often told us about the kindness with which you used to point out to him what he ought to do, and what he ought to abstain from doing, and the interest you seemed to feel in him."

"I did feel it—I mean, I do feel it," said I, eagerly; "none of our youngsters ever interested me so much as Johnny."

"Well, *I* cannot wonder at it," said the mother, sensibly affected; "*I may* say that I think everybody must feel Johnny to be a most attractive boy, and I *know* that he is as good as he is attractive."

"Johnny complies with the true definition of a gentleman," said I; "a Christian that will take a polish. You have good reason to be proud of him."

"Do you think he will succeed in his profession?" asked Lady Elizabeth.

"I see every prospect of success, and none of failure," I replied.

"He studies to qualify himself," said she.

"Yes," answered I; "he has a high sense of duty, and those who do their work conscientiously soon learn to do it well, and he has courage and quickness."

This was all true; but if it had pleased her ladyship to assert that Johnny was competent to encounter and slay a full-grown rhinoceros in single combat, I should have assented all the same, though I should not have yielded an iota of any opinion I had formed to the Twelve Judges, the Bench of Bishops, or even the Marchioness of Mesopotamia.

"I hope we shall see you here very often, Captain Cobb," said the lady; "we dine at six, this time of the year, and these fine evenings it is nothing of a stroll for you and Johnny. You know we do not insist

upon white waistcoats amidst the mountain limestone."

I assured her with great truth and sincerity that I should be very glad indeed to stroll over with Johnny very often; and felt a considerable weight off my mind at this gracious reception on the part of a lady, who was at that time perhaps the only person in the world that I stood in some degree in awe of, for I had not been perfectly certain what sort of a footing it would have pleased her to place me on. The very fact of propinquity making familiar intercourse so easy, sometimes induces people to imagine a necessity of holding one at arms' length—a treatment that would have struck a colder chill into me than I should have at all liked.

Now, however, I saw light. I felt the point of the wedge firmly inserted, and that scientific knowledge which had caused me to be regarded with such fraternal affection by the Royal Artillery at Ballymacrocodile, had made me mechanician enough (to say nothing of a little modest confidence in myself) to apprehend that the point of the wedge once introduced, and a due momentum applied, the back was likely soon to follow.

"I think it will do Johnny good," said she; "for ever since his wound I do not think he has taken exercise enough; he sits and reads, and I think sometimes writes, and at his age I see no good in such sedentary habits; so that a gentle stroll on a fine evening will, I am sure, help him to recover his health."

"I'll take care that he takes those sort of gentle strolls pretty often," replied I; (with a half glance at the fuschia and mignonette, and never was promise made with more sincerity.) "He's very docile; I shall find no great difficulty."

"It is so very kind of you," answered she. "I am very anxious that his health and strength should be thoroughly restored, for his poor father always said that no officer could be successful in his profession when actual warfare is going on, without good health and a strong constitution; and, if war should break out, I could not bear the idea of Johnny not distinguishing himself in the service."

This was the Lady Elizabeth Waldgrave, widow of Major-General Waldgrave, C.B.,

that spoke, and not the mother of Johnny; the latter personage would have had the warmest wish of her heart gratified by seeing that young gentleman peaceably established at Beauchamp Hall for the rest of his days, very popular in the neighbourhood, and regular at church and quarter-sessions, rising rapidly in the estimation of his brother magistrates and country gentlemen as a good judge of pigs, poachers, and turnips, much noticed by the lord-lieutenant, and not out of the betting for the county.

Perhaps, as the Derbyshire militia was not liable to be ordered out of the country except in case of an invasion, he might be allowed to disport himself in the uniform of that gallant corps until he attained the

dignity of deputy-lieutenant; and though, of course, she did not wish him to marry just yet, it would be delightful to feel that he placed implicit confidence in her judgment on the subject of the choice of a wife.

This was the mother; but there is a duality in position as well as in the brain; and the widow of the general officer, who remembered how her heart had been touched when she heard of how young Arthur Waldgrave, in the dead of winter, in the middle of the disastrous retreat to Corunna, when the French cavalry were pressing hot and fast upon the half demoralized British, and the shot was already beginning to fall thick and dangerous, had dismounted from his horse that the wife of

a private soldier, the hour of whose confinement was fast drawing nigh, might be placed upon the saddle, and who recollected with what feelings she had afterwards read how he had borne his part in that fearful flank movement of the Fusilier Brigade at Albuera, and, after passing unhurt through shot and shell, and fire and steel, had, almost by miracle, escaped drowning in the dash at the main breach at Ciudad Rodrigo, where so many of his fellow-soldiers perished in the watery snare that a warlike astuteness had prepared for the assailants; and when she thought, too, of the pride and delight with which she looked on her hero when he became her own, because he was a hero and loved her—she, the widow of a soldier, and the daughter of a line of

warriors, could not altogether, even when the mother's love was brightest and purest, divest her mind of the glory and the glitter, the triumph and the vanity of war, the thunder of the battle, the truncheon of command, and the deference of princes.

Nor, indeed, do I believe that, in her secret heart, was Edith quite free from this feeling; but in her youth war had not been the patriot's sacred mission, as it was in Lady Elizabeth's; and the view she took of it was, that it was an evil that could not always be avoided, instead of a duty to be eagerly and proudly performed.

Lady Elizabeth had been a beauty in her youth, and the worship of beauty, in her day, was of a different order, at least as far as ball-rooms are concerned, from the present time;

true, there were dandies in those days, but then, also, there were wits; none of them could dance, but some of them could write, and some of them could fight; there were drinkers, but great names adorned even that roll of death; there were greater inequalities but less dead level; a girl going into society came in contact with men, not boys, and a sharper outline of character was struck out in the rough mould of those times, than their grandmothers possessed, or their granddaughters are likely to inherit.

Lady Elizabeth was a little quiet, unpretending woman, very kind-hearted, very little inclined to put herself forward, with a fresh recollection of the days when her soul hankered after a fresh canto of "Childe

Harold," and could hardly keep her temper even now at the recollection of the convention of Cintra.

She had a whimsical conglomeration of ideas and feelings in her mind about one engrossing topic of her younger days—viz., Queen Caroline. She could not reconcile her natural and hereditary loyalty with another feeling of not less powerful nature, and of far longer descent—viz., her womanly instinct; but with all this she was prompt, and almost always accurate in decision, knew her own interest and that of her children perfectly; and though inclined to self-sacrifice when only she herself was personally concerned, guarded them with a draconical vigilance; could discern, with that unerring eye that comes only from

long and successful practice, the status and position of either man or woman, and sometimes carried exclusiveness, I thought, a little too far.

She said, to do so was a necessity of widowhood, and I dare say she was right; at least, as one of the included, I was not inclined to quarrel with it; but I was glad to find that neither she nor Edith considered beer vulgar, for in summer and warm weather I very much preferred it to wine. Of course she had her weak points, which it was my business to find out. I did so, but shall not disclose them here. An invitation to stay dinner was, as the reader may suppose, readily accepted, and Edith proceeded to lionize me.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MILKY WAY—RURAL ENJOYMENTS—THE KERNEL
AND THE HUSK—BUBBLES OF THE HEART—THE
QUEEN OF THE POULTRY-YARD—"TO PERSONS
ABOUT TO MARRY"—LADY STOCK-JOBGING—THE
EVENING AND THE MORNING—THE DAWNING OF
THE DAY SPRING.

OUR first visit was to the dairy. I like women who have a taste for dairies. I cannot say that I understand the science of lactology myself; it is eminently a feminine department of animated nature, and therefore I admire its professors of the gentler sex. This particular dairy hit my

fancy extremely. I had had no idea before of what a number of things so simple an article as milk required in its transit from the cow to the human creature. A pail and a jug had been my idea of its intermediate stages; and I thought I should never be tired of hearing Edith explain how it was divided into three rooms; how in the milk-house were the coolers and the slab for laying the butter on, and all sorts of contrivances for letting milk, and water, and air, in and out; and here and there a sort of elementary battledore and shuttlecock; and how in the churning-room there were the fire-place, and the boiler, and the copper; and how the third room held the pails, and sieves, and skimming-dishes, and butter-prints, and bowls, and tubs, and all sort

of exceedingly clean and incomprehensible utensils. I listened to it all with the greatest possible interest; but I do not think I could make a pound of butter, and I am certain I could not build a dairy.

The cow-house came in for part of our attentions. I did not take precisely the same interest in it that I did in the dairy. There was nothing to explain about the cows, and I do not know that I altogether liked seeing Edith pet them. I do not say that there was any sense in that feeling; simply, so it was. This is a confession, not an epic. But, in spite of the cows, I spent some happy hours.

Towards dinner-time Johnny made his appearance; he had been effecting a country visit to a respectable hazy country gentle-

man, who had insisted upon showing him his improvements, to say nothing of a prodigious plough that was to work underground miracles, a threshing-machine that was to "whip the 'varsal world," and some manure that, at an ounce and a half to the acre, was to raise seven quarters of wheat, and had thereby delayed Johnny's return, to the great disquiet of that gentleman, who by no means felt it his bent—

"To tame the genius of the stubborn plain."

"Oh, Cobb," said he, "we have been waiting so anxiously for you. My mother has all sorts of questions to ask you, and Edith has been so impatient, she could not understand the regiment moving so slow. I believe she fancied it was to come by the

mail—and I've got such a lot of things to tell you, and all the regimental news to hear—and I don't think you're looking well, you look anxious and careworn. What's the matter with you? Ellen O'Reilly? No: well, you look as if you were in love; perhaps it's only the Stock Exchange. Well, you know, them as ventures may win, them as don't venture can't expect to win;" and so he ran on, as he conducted me to his room, where the modest preparation of washing my hands was to stand in the stead of a more elaborate toilette.

I did not very much like that being pitchforked all standing into a dining-room, at least into the dining-room of Beauchamp Hall, in that morning-dress, which, however, had been put on with great care. I had

the sort of feeling that makes one put on one's best clothes for going to church, and in the course of my scrambling toilette I discovered that I was not half shaved. A man that sells a razor that does not cut properly ought to be hanged. However, the waistcoat was not so bad, and the coat sat particularly well in my eyes since the addition of the flowers mentioned in the last chapter. Lord! what bubbles we do blow, and think the explosion of a shell preferable to their bursting, and crack go they, and we blow more.

"Well, and how are all the fellows getting on?" asked Johnny, as he presented me with a clean towel, with the air of a young emperor doing the honours of a hall of reception hung with crimson velvet and

gold embroidery. "Did Musgrave get his uncle to pay his debts?"

"Yes, he did, Johnny," said I, "upon the usual condition of his contracting no more—an arrangement which, I presume, will partake of the customary temporary and provisional character of such conventions."

"I wish he was in our company," said that young philanthropist, thoughtfully; "he would not be getting into scrapes then."

"Why, Johnny," said I, somewhat, I confess, pleased with the involuntary compliment implied in the remark of his; "you do not want to get rid of Ravenswood, do you?"

"I like Ravenswood very well," returned he; "but still he frightens me sometimes."

"Frightens you!" repeated I, in astonishment; for, quiet and smooth as Johnny was, he had remarkable nerve for one so young. "How do you mean, frighten you?"

"The way he talks about things that ought not to be talked of so," answered he, simply. "I do not like it."

"Neither do I, Johnny," returned I, now understanding his meaning. "Neither do I; but I am afraid it is past our power to mend that. All that you have to do, is, not to pay any attention to what he says, and we'll pay every attention to what *that* says;" for, at that moment, the dinner bell sounded, and we descended.

"I am truly happy to see you *here*, Captain Cobb," said Lady Elizabeth, with a stately courtesy, as we seated ourselves at

table, emphasising the word *here*, as if to draw a marked distinction between town and country; and, indeed, I believe the good old lady considered herself as little more than encamped in London; for, in those days, people considered London air poisonous out of the season. Easter was the knife that opened the London oyster to the world, and the Belgravian *avant-saison* was as yet undreamed of or unanticipated.

"It looks more like home, does it not, Captain Cobb?" said Edith. "I like the flowers that I pluck myself (I liked them too), and I fancy the fruit is better for seeing it growing on the trees."

"The country certainly individualizes one more," I remarked. "In London one is but a particle of the great, roaring, indif-

ferent mass; in the country, one has not only an existence of one's own, but also a little social system that revolves round one."

"The social system that revolves round Edith makes a horrible cackling and hissing," said Johnny; "for she's perpetually feeding the ducks and the geese; she's queen among the pigs and the poultry."

"Johnny has no great taste for rural enjoyments," said Edith, laughing. "I think his idea of a country life is fresh eggs for breakfast, and a Newfoundland dog. He won't take any interest in the farm or the garden, except the quantity of gooseberries he eats; and I don't think he knows a plough from a harrow."

"We don't work with ploughs and har-

rows in the army," remarked that ferocious young gladiator; "but I know shot from shell, and a mortar from a howitzer; and I don't believe Cobb there knows a bit more about husbandry than I do, only, if you do but listen to him, he'll make you believe he does."

"I take great interest in the subject, Johnny," said I; "all true patriots do."

"Yes," retorted the youth, "he reads the account of the corn-market, because he thinks that if corn falls his shares will rise. He's always dabbling in some speculation or other—an atmospheric railway, or an underground canal."

Lady Elizabeth looked rather grave at these revelations of Johnny's, and I hastened to remove any unfavourable impres-

sions that they might have made on her mind by a long and tedious discourse (which for that reason I shall not repeat here) on the subject of prudence in money matters (for which I was so remarkable), during the delivery of which Johnny sat open-mouthed, and Edith looked somewhat puzzled. I do not think it exactly squared with her view of my character, but it pacified Lady Elizabeth, which was all I cared for; and indeed, upon the whole, it did some good, for she subsequently consulted me, in a very mysterious and confidential manner, about the investment of some savings which had accrued during her children's minorities, which gave me a certain insight into their circumstances, which is a thing always to be desired by a prudent

man like me, who meditated taking on himself the awful responsibility of "the father of a family;" and, indeed, where attainable, that knowledge of the circumstance of the "other side" is an article to be seriously recommended "to persons about to marry."

I found myself compelled to demolish a little consolar castle in the air which her ladyship had constructed, and wherein she proposed obtaining six per cent. for her money, by selling consols immediately after the dividend, and buying Reduced to sell again after *its* dividend and re-purchase consols, whereby she expected to make four half yearly dividends per annum, a process much resembling the man's jumping into a bottle.

She had also an undefined and somewhat superstitious reverence for bank stock, which I believe she imagined to possess some peculiar sanctity among dividend-paying securities, and was astounded when I informed her that not only was its dividend upon a much less stable foundation than that on consols, but that it actually at that very time was in danger of being reduced (as, indeed, came to pass soon afterwards), which heresy—having an idea that the word “bank” was one that endured for ever—she at first was inclined to treat with scorn and contempt; but upon Johnny informing her that I knew all the stocks and funds, and could call them all by their names, she yielded, and so saved herself some hundreds of pounds.

I can understand Lady Elizabeth not being very skilful in the arcana of the Stock Exchange; but what is always a puzzle to me is, how it happens that those who are habitually engaged in that particular branch of the business of Mammon, come to understand so little about it. I never met a stockjobber who could see his way three weeks before him, or give me the slightest idea of the real value of any investment. They tell you such and such a thing is "good;" they talk learnedly of backwardation, account, call, and put; they have a zoology of bull, bear, lame duck, and waddling; a geography that extends over the surface of the known world, and rather farther, for I do not believe that any one really knows where Ecuador—if there is

such a place—actually is; a mineralogy consisting mainly of brass, notwithstanding its arduous researches in South American mines; an astronomy in which moonshine is the leading element; and a faith which includes even the most heterodox transatlantic securities; but woe to the simple adventurer that trusts himself to their guidance; it is the blind leading the blind, but taking remarkably good care that *both* do not fall into the ditch.

My unqualified repudiation of any pursuit so utterly unprincipled (and liable to loss) as speculation, manifestly raised me in the estimation of those two ladies, as I have frequently observed it do with others, though I never have been able to make out exactly what it is that the female mind

revolts at in those transactions—their apparent gambling character, or the making money honestly, which I observe most young ladies, and a good many old ones, hold in utter contempt and abhorrence.

In this instance I thought it wise to be content with my success, and not to institute too searching an investigation into its causes, and I answered some questions of Edith about the solvency of the savings banks, with as much gravity as if I had myself been the very soul and animating spirit of the national debt. We were not long at dinner, nor did Johnny and I sit any great length of time after the ladies left us, for seeing Edith wandering about the garden without her bonnet, we thought it expedient to join her.

"I always like the silence and the stillness of evening in the country," said she; "it is such a contrast to the roar and rattle of London. I often think that ceaseless rattle must affect people's health there. I cannot understand a constant strain upon the nerves without doing mischief. I so constantly repeat to myself that beautiful stanza of Gray's"—

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
The shepherd homewards plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

"Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the world a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle hums her drowsy flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds."

"I understand the feeling," replied I,

"but I do not share it. I can feel the repose of evening, but I prefer the feeling of activity and energy that belongs to morning; it harmonizes more with my temperament."

"I suppose it ought to be so," she answered; "it is for men to act, for women to be passive. It is best it should be so."

I highly approved of this sentiment in Edith, for I have seen in the course of my life divers charming women who *would* insist on meddling in what was naturally man's work, and making the most awful hashes in consequence. I have a very high opinion of women, but there are some things that they cannot do: they cannot whistle, they cannot throw stones, they cannot say

"fellow," and I do not think they are remarkably good at statistics.

"I do not clearly see why we are to have all the rough work to do," quoth Johnny. "I think women over thirty ought to make themselves useful."

"On the principle of their ceasing to be ornamenta?!" suggested Edith. "Really Johnny, we should have a pleasant time of it if you had your way—first a toy, then a drudge, then an encumbrance. Thank you, Johnny."

"They're much too *exigeantes*," said that spirited young man, obviously with a view of impressing me with a sense of his independence from the trammels of female influence at home; "they ought to be kept to their bearings."

"I hope you have not been teaching Johnny these doctrines," said Edith, turning to me. "He's only begun to broach them since you marched in."

"He'll get better of them soon," replied I; "it's only a slight attack of erysipelas on the mind;" and we went in to tea.

Tea was never a meal which I regarded with any very great devotion; but on this occasion I thought it discreet to partake of it. I did not find it nearly so disagreeable as I expected. Johnny seemed quite reconciled to it. I suppose that comes from living in the bosom of a family. And thus terminated the first day that I had ever spent at Beauchamp Hall.

Slowly, very slowly, I rode down that

ancient avenue, whose great gnarled oaks, rough as the rock-girt scene in which they grew into all manner of shapes, and knots, and crannies, must have looked down, already as giants, on the unfortunate Charles Edward and his unruly array, the day before he faltered—and fell. Slowly, very slowly, I passed the little half savage wood, on whose recesses now slept the silent moonlight; and I began to compare my feeling and ideas with those which had occupied my mind in the morning. The disquiet and nervousness of the morning were replaced by an undefined feeling of awe mingled with an indescribable hope. It seemed as if a glimpse of a new existence were opening on my view—clouds rolling

back, light appearing, growing, gleaming—
a path rising over troubled waters, and a
harmony in life that had, as yet, escaped
my observation.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MIASMA OF THE BARRACK—THE PEOPLED
SLUMBER—THE PROCESSION OF THE PAST—INDE-
PENDENCE & ELEGANCE—RAVENSWOOD UPON
LOVE—SYMPTOMS OF A RAW—THE WRONG SIDE
OF THE HEDGE—THE RIGHT SIDE—THE GLEN OF
THE COBOLDS—THE SPIRITS OF AIR AND SEA—
THE LIGHT OF THE WATERS—VARIATIONS ON DIF-
FERENT THEMES—THOUGHT—LOVE—GLORY, AND
ITS PERQUISITES—JOHNNY SHOWS HIS HAND,
WHICH SHOWS HIS HEART—THE TOUCH THAT
TURNS EVERYTHING TO GOLD.

THE most remarkable part of the tone of
mind in which I traversed the intervals
between Beauchamp Hall and the village of

Carlton was, that it did not dissolve itself into thin air, the instant I entered the barracks, which indeed was not an edifice constructed upon the usual principles upon which British soldiers are stored for home consumption, but a private house taken for this special occasion, and which consequently having papered walls, bells, and some other evidences of civilization, did not produce the same unsentimentalizing effect on the mind that is the customary result of those buildings, which Ravenswood used justly to term factories, wherein flesh and blood is wrought into fire and sword.

I dreamed that night, not of Edith, as the discerning reader will of course suppose, but of the days of my childhood long gone, almost forgotten till recalled by a touch

upon one of those mysterious chords that vibrate between the heart and the brain. I dreamed of fresh, hopeful, confident boyhood—the fulness of anticipation, the openness of the young heart, the enjoyment of mere existence, and the lovingness of the unscarred spirit. Scenes, actions, play-mates' games, trivial in themselves, yet interwoven with my life, seemed to hover about me, and the grim realities of after life intruded themselves nowhere. Then the words of the poet embodied themselves in my vision of the night, and a shadowy train swept past.

“They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead,
Each hand as warm, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.”

I dreamed of the lonely ramble by the river side, and the clamber down into the basin of that little waterfall, under whose overhanging banks I used to sit for hours devouring "Marmion," or the "Lady of the Lake," and wondering where the mighty magician acquired that spell which gave him the power of so wielding words as to stir the very inmost soul within me; and whether I might ever dare to aspire to stand out into the light of day on a printed page, and if bright eyes would grow brighter as they read; and when I used to move the stones in the exciting hunt after eels, and of the inward struggle when that unconscious water-wagtail perched within range, and the pebbles lay about so temptingly about the size of walnuts;

and of my first duellum, that single combat with the turkey-cock, when with a sinking heart and a trembling hand I advanced against the strutting bully, and then and there, as he turned tail and fled, learned once for all, that great lesson in life, the inestimable value of a bold front, and how poor dear Mary Grant clapped her tiny hands and screamed with delight as her champion defeated the worse than dragon that had been their joint terror for weeks; and then my dream swept over the grassy mound in that secluded churchyard where she sleeps sound by the side of the mother she loved so well; and then once more I underwent the parting when I first went to school, and the joyful return for the holidays, and other scenes dear to memory,

yet not often of late years recalled to mine.

I was awoke by the bugle.

Many officers like detachment, and its dressing-gownish independence. I was always contented enough. I liked both my subalterns, and they liked me. I could read in detachment—which was impossible at head quarters, for the daily morning parade almost invariably idles every officer in a regiment for the rest of the day; and could dine in a shooting jacket. Ravenswood and I, too, could conduct our discussions by ourselves, or at most with Johnny as audience, with much more satisfaction to ourselves than in the presence of a numerous and highly disciplined audience in red coats, who did not quite

penetrate to the depths of our philosophy.

We used to have the most awful and profound metaphysical discussions, much enlivened by the facility with which I could make him contradict himself; and every morning we had a brilliant passage of arms on the subject of love, which he alleged, with some little asperity, to be simply an instinct, differing in us from other animals by being under the control of pecuniary calculation; whereas I, on the other hand, stoutly asserted and triumphantly demonstrated by arguments, which I shall not here repeat, from the dread of wearying the reader, that it was one of the highest and holiest impulses of our nature, connecting us directly with the

spiritual world, as being that condition of mind more nearly approaching to the state of a beatified spirit in its blissful devotion, abnegation of self and elevated and purified tone, than the spirit, clogged with clay, can otherwise attain; which view of mine I supported with great energy and eloquence, and regret that Johnny was not present to hear it, and report it at home.

I began to perceive that Ravenswood was somewhat changed during his absence, not merely in person, but in mind. He was more snappish, and perhaps a little more ready to impute interested or undignified motives than before, but I paid little attention to that at the time, and about two o'clock we rode out together to take a canter in the country; and as we rode out

there occurred to my mind for the first time the question—Has Ravenswood been crossed in love? I could not answer the question, but still, as far as it went, the very idea was a new light.

I have not yet ascertained what it was that put it into our wise military heads to cram our horses at every fence we saw, but I know that I got into a field without the discreet precaution of seeing how I was to get out of it. The punishment of which capital felony (in the eyes of hunters of the fox) was, that I was obliged to charge a blindish fence, into a deep lane, and very nearly lighted, man and horse, upon Edith Waldgrave, who was taking a quiet country ride with Johnny. She coloured and started, but showed so little appearance of fear or

disturbance, that I positively worshipped her self-possession.

"I did not think you were such a fool, Cobb," said Johnuy, for that youth had been more startled by my Avatar than he judged consisted with the dignity of a subaltern of Light Infantry—had exclaimed "Oh!" with a loud voice—and was very much put out accordingly.

"I am afraid you don't keep good discipline in your company, Captain Cobb," said Edith, smiling. "A subaltern calling his captain a fool—I never heard of such a thing."

"He's on leave, now," I said, beginning to recover my scattered senses, which had fled on the wings of the four winds of heaven when I saw by how little I had avoided a

catastrophe which would have driven me mad. "We shall have him in harness again on Monday." And at the same moment crash came Ravenswood through another part of the hedge. Johnny stood the fire without flinching this time. Edith burst out laughing.

"Pray, are we to expect any more arrivals?" asked she.

"No; we are all here, now," replied I. "I do not think you know Mr. Ravenswood; will you allow me to present him?" And, actually, that parricidal subaltern of mine presumed to look as if he admired her.

"If you have had leaping enough for the present," said Edith, turning to me, after gravely assuring Ravenswood that Lady

Elizabeth would be very happy to see him at Beauchamp Hall, whenever he was inclined to ride over there; "if you would condescend to ride along a level road, I think we can show you as pretty a ride as any in England."

We gladly availed ourself of the proffered guidance; indeed, if it had led into the hottest spot of the great Sahara, or the moistest bog in the kingdom of Connaught, I should not have shrunk from it; and in no great time we came to a point where the road suddenly enters a valley, of great and singular beauty.

On either side, vast and abrupt rocks of grey limestone, on whose surface might plainly be traced those medals of creation with which Time marks his milestones, the

reliefs of the shells of which they were composed, reared aloft their grotesque forms, rugged and bristling with the moss and the lichen, the yew and the mountain ash; and, indeed, it looked like a scene in which the sprigs of the latter might be supposed to exercise the power which is attributed to them, in warding off the attacks of fairies, gnomes, cobolds, or any other of the corporation of spirits. Many of those towering, yet massive blocks of unhewn stone, that rose up against the sky on each side, a lively fancy might have readily converted into the pinnacles that adorn the palace of the monarch of the mine, the cobold king, and the bare terraces that occasionally met the eye, would have well suited an array of his swarth retainers.

A narrow, and somewhat broken path, wound along the margin of a little river, which in some places nearly filled the ravine, and by no means reached my idea of a level road, as Edith was placed to term it; and every here and there projecting precipices stood like giants in our path, and seemed to bar the way with all the mute eloquence of rock. However, each giant on near approach lost his obstructive character; there was always road enough for one sometimes, indeed generally, for two, and we managed to advance.

“You see,” said Edith, “we poor Derbyshire people cannot boast of the fertility of the neighbouring country. The other side of the road is Staffordshire, and it is covered with a fine hanging wood; whilst, on one

side, there is little but moss and bare rock, bare, grey, cold rock, yet look in what spires and pyramids they shoot up; look at that great gaunt obelisk of nature's own handiwork, all festooned and netted over with ivy. I never see it, without my mind going back to the Druids."

"Now the idea that struck me when I saw it," I replied, "was, that it was Cyclopean in its character, but I agree with you, it is Druidical."

"We are coming to my favourite spot," said Edith; "you can hear the river already crying out, like Sterne's starling, 'I can't get out.'"

The scene did credit to Edith's taste. The rocks, rent into all sorts of fantastic forms, some, to all appearance, held by

scarcely a stronger stay than the root of a stray mountain ash, and nodding to their fall, some already overthrown, closed abruptly, I had almost said savagely, upon the stream, which, pent up and fiercely struggling to get free, roared, and fretted, and raged, yet danced and sparkled, nevertheless, till it rolled down the shining rockwork that imprisoned it into a basin of foam of the purest white, and then, gliding gracefully and silently away, gently, but never languidly, spread out into a little silver sheet that encircled a small, smooth, sandy ialet, and, dispersing itself among tufts of grass and miniature forests of bulrushes, played for a second with the water-lilies and the slender threads of the aquatic plants that floated, fixed yet never resting

on the surface, and then streaming, in a perfectly lucid mass, over another of the steps that it descended into the sea, again buried itself in its own foam.

"Is it not beautiful?" said Edith, her cheek flushing, her eye brightening, and as I thought the beauty of the scene, which was undeniable, reflected in her countenance; "I never see this little glen without, I will not say believing in fairies, but, at all events, being inclined to be very tolerant to those who do. I can so perfectly imagine the Good People, with their tiny diamond lances, all greenery and sparkle, dancing on that island, and the spirits of the stream coming shooting down that waterfall with their coronets of rushes and girdles of water-lilies, to join them; and the great surly gnomes looking

out of the clefts of the rocks, and hailing one another in an uncouth jabber, as sulky as bears because *they* could not join that fairy dance—the great, stumpy, cross curmudgeons—and the night wind just whispering a fairy melody through the rushes, with the musical rolling of the pebbles for a bass. How a vagrant fancy can people a lonely spot with inhabitants that are not.”

“There are substances and shadows in matter,” said I, “impressed, and, if I might use the expression, somewhat spiritualized by the genius of the place; there is waking and dreaming in the mind, and there are air princes in the empire of thought.”

“Yes,” said Ravenswood, “undreamed images come to light with much musing;

for thought is nothing but mind and matter playing at hide and seek."

Edith turned, not sharply but quickly towards him. "Is that your definition of thought, Mr. Ravenswood?" said she. "It does not satisfy me. Thought is in my mind, the reflection of the future on the present from the mirror of the past."

"Thought," said I, "is the brain's watch-dog, hunting his own tail."

Edith laughed. "When will you ever be serious?" said she. "Johnny, give us your definition of thought."

"Thought," said Johnny, thus suddenly appealed to, "thought, 'Nanny—Edith, I mean,'" and he coloured up.

"That will do," said I; "we know all about your idea of thought now."

“How—what?” said Edith, innocently and inquiringly; “what does Nanny mean?” and I then discovered that that accomplished young hypocrite had not said a syllable about the very existence of Nanny O'Reilly to his anxious mother and affectionate sister, which latter I forthwith enlightened on the subject—adding, that I expected every day to receive intelligence that the unfortunate young lady had hanged herself in her garters, and would subsequently appear at Beauchamp Hall and reproach Johnny the deluder, after the manner of the unfortunate Miss Bailey; and whilst I was so disporting myself, I remarked that Johnny winced under the operation much more than I had at all anticipated.

from my excellent and epigrammatic lieutenant, and, indeed, differed *toto cœlo* from the doctrines he had laid down that very morning; and I resolved to take the earliest opportunity of "overhauling" him on the subject; but the present was not the time for any operation of the sort. • I had metal more attractive at hand, but Johnny was considerably mystified by this flowery discourse of Ravenswood; his idea of that gentleman's conversation being, a back-handed hit at human nature, a shot at philanthropy, or a slap at the Established Church; and I think he somewhat mistrusted the wings on which our light company Icarus was soaring towards that sun against whose beams ice and snow can offer no long resistance.

"I do not see why we are always to be troubling our heads about love," said that bloodthirsty young warrior; "it's all nonsense!"

"You heathen!" interjaculated Edith.

"Love," continued he, "is all very well in its way, but the true pursuit for a man is glory."

"Glory," said I, "glory is nothing but love in armour—slashing, instead of shooting; knocking out men's brains instead of touching up their hearts. Glory goes for nothing among men, its real meaning is nothing more than having one's own way among the women."

"Glory is the skeleton in a halo," said Ravenswood; "the rainbow when it rains blood."

"Do you think nothing of the cause in which it is acquired, Mr. Ravenswood?" asked Edith; "surely all true glory rests upon a righteous cause!"

"What is a righteous cause?" asked Ravenswood, recuring to a sneer, which was much more his natural tone of conversation than that he had so recently and, to me, unaccountably adopted; "what is a righteous cause?"

"What is truth, was once asked before," replied Edith, gravely, and manifestly displeased, as I foresaw (not without some slight inward satisfaction), the moment Ravenswood put the suicidal question, for it jarred most acutely on her organization, in which a love of truth and rectitude, an enlarged, yet strictly defined conscientious-

ness predominated, and, indeed, gave me no little trouble. If I was to tell a story, I liked to indulge in a fine, liberal style of narration. It bothers one having to attend still more to adhere to the exact facts. If I saw an opening for a joke, I did not think it right that the enjoyment of the public should be curtailed by considerations as to whether the pleasantry was exactly fair or just. I do not think I have the organ of veneration very strongly developed, though I am certain Edith has. I have no doubt but that I am entirely wrong, that without conscientiousness, society could not get on at all; and I shall endeavour to train my children to a high sense of it, which I suppose is the next best thing to having it oneself.

Ravenswood was rather taken aback by Edith's answer; he saw that it meant something, and was intended to hit hard, but did not know what or how, inasmuch as he did not know where it came from, and did not, therefore, understand the not very flattering comparison it was intended to institute, though I subsequently discovered that of late his studies in those subjects had been pushed much further than I had at all supposed.

We now reached a bit of sward that tempted us to a canter, and soon afterwards came out into a more open country, on a broader road, which I perceived led towards Beauchamp Hall, and I remarked, after passing a certain lane, what amounted almost to a change in the face of the country, an increased neatness in the

cottages, and an absolute affluence in fruit and flowers in the gardens; at the same time I thought I observed an increased interest in our cavalcade on the part of the country people, and soon discovered, upon inquiry, that the conjecture I had hazarded was just, and that we had entered upon the Beauchamp estate. I remarked to Edith the beauty of the gardens.

"I am glad it has struck your eye," said she, looking pleased; "it is quite a hobby of mine. Many years ago, Mr. Wharton impressed on my mind the maxim, that horticulture is the parent of agriculture, and the best way to make good farmers, is first to make good gardeners."

"Well," I said, "gardening is farming on a small scale, when you can watch the results closely."

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"We began very quietly," continued she; "we only offered a small reward for the best cabbage, and only one competitor appeared, and a very poor cabbage it was; but he got his five shillings! This was not very encouraging; but there were some who looked on said they could have done as well themselves, and *the next year they tried*. We then increased the number of prizes, but those who won the second and third prizes thought they would like the first, and so the spirit of emulation that that solitary and very middling cabbage introduced into the cottages almost turned the estate into a garden, and added immeasurably to their comforts."

At this moment I perceived that the good people knew *who* it was that thus

added to their comforts, for a little, chubby child, that was playing in front of one of the cottages, upon seeing Edith, hastily plucked two or three flowers, and toddled forward to the gate, holding them up for Edith to take, which she did, leaving the child in a state of high exultation. I do not exactly remember the process by which these flowers came into my possession, but I recollect that evening finding myself putting them in water, and I rather think that they might be found adorning my hortus siccus to this day.

“Good bye, Mr. Ravenswood,—I hope you will cure your heterodox ideas about a righteous cause,” said Edith, as we parted, frankly extending her hand to him, for I suspect that her heart smote her for having

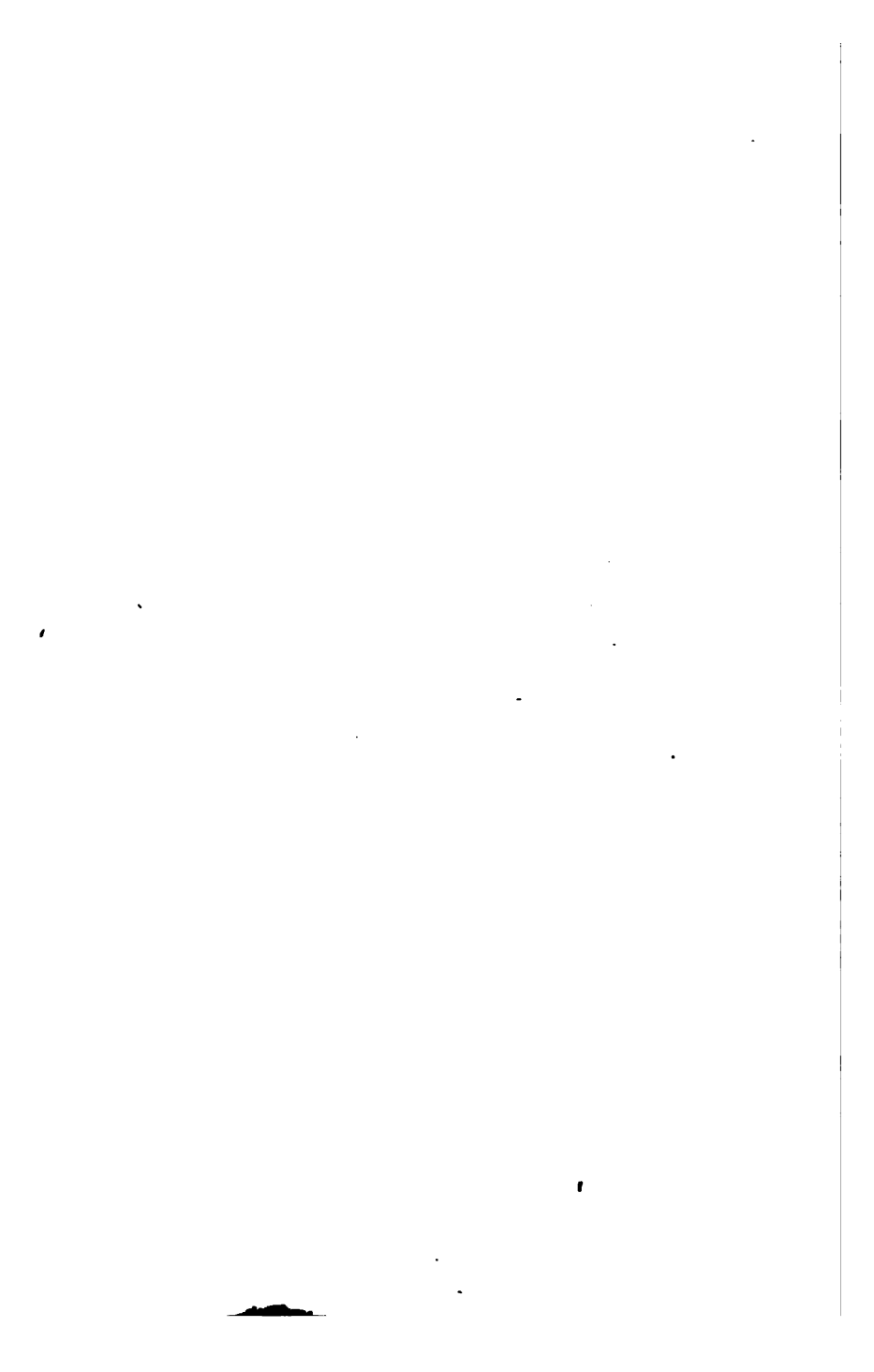
been perhaps a little sharp in her answer. Now, Johnny, we mustn't keep mamma waiting for dinner."

How it happened that it was actually so near dinner-time, I have not yet ascertained. I did not think it was more than four o'clock, but Ravenswood said it was near six, adding, "Time the beneficent, wafts us from the gentle delights of breakfast to the sterner joys of dinner."

END OF VOL. II.



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CONFESSIONS
OF
COUNTRY QUARTERS.

VOL. III.

CONFESSIONS
OF
COUNTRY QUARTERS:

BEING

Some Passages in the Life

OF

SOMERSET CAVENDISH COBB, ESQ.

Late Captain in the 120th Foot (Camberwell Rangers.)

BY

CAPTAIN CHARLES KNOX,

AUTHOR OF "HARDNESS," "THE ARK AND THE DELUGE," ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



"Oh, ladies, beware of a gay young knight,
That loves, and then rides away."

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1852.

CONFESSIONS OF COUNTRY QUARTERS.


CHAPTER I.

THE FEAST OF THE LIONS OF WAR—INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE SAXONS—SINS OF OMISSION—PRO-
POSED METAMORPHOSIS—HABITS AND PRACTICES
OF THE FRENCH EAGLES—LEARNING AND KNOW-
LEDGE.

TIME with me passed now in a dream. Somehow or other I generally found myself at Beauchamp Hall four or five times in the week, and the expiry of Johnny's leave rather increased than diminished the number of visits. Occasionally we had company

at home. One fine afternoon, Jenkins, Boyd, and Nugent did us the honour of paying us a visit in a curiously constructed dog-cart, the property of the Welsh grenadier, which the serjeant-major of the regiment pronounced a "very officer-like gig."

We were enabled to spread our hospitable board with great dignity and éclat, for Ravenswood was perpetually whipping the adjacent streams and the Naiads that dwelt therein, and the consequence was an affluence of trout, which, being scientifically dressed under my directions, "au bleu," always produced a great effect, that manner not having made much progress in the cuisine of Derbyshire. Beauchamp Hall supplied us with game, fruit, vegetables, and a trifle of poultry. The omelettes of my dressing were lighter



than sunbeams, and I had corrupted Johnny's young mind so far as to teach him how to prepare a devil, so irresistible, that it would have seduced Adam straight, without the intervention of Eve.

A soldier's wife can always compose a species of hodge-podge, or mutton-broth, which, between ourselves, is a much better thing than that glutinous, medicinal, amorphous, chaotic, opaque, semifluid, muddy mixture, that Mrs. Park Lane calls "abattis d'oie," and her cook "giblet soup," and my reclaimed savage, Doddy, boiled potatoes, with a skill that must have come to him in direct male descent, or apostolical succession from St. Patrick.

Worthy Saxon reader, you do not know how to boil potatoes. Hear the words of a

Celt, and be wise. "Plaze yer honour," said Doddy, upon being subjected to the question, "first and foremost, when the praties is half done, I poor aff the hot wather altogether, empty the pot of it, and then fill up again with could, that strikes the heat into the very hearts of them. Then bile 'em up again till they be done, and then poor off all the wather, and let them stand in the pot before the fire to stame, by which manes they get crisp and maly; faith! and they're beautiful when they're crackin' their jackets."

If potatoes are not properly boiled in all parts of the British empire after this, all that I can say is, that it is no fault of mine.

Deodatus, the divinely bestowed, with that



easy and affable way of making himself at home that belongs to his country and class, had already insinuated himself into an agreeable footing of quiet intimacy in the servants' hall at Lady Elizabeth's, where he heard a good deal of domestic news, which he considered it his duty to communicate to me; and this day, as I was issuing to him a certain hospitable order respecting a double supply of potatoes, accompanied with my customary threat of wringing his neck if they were not properly done, which violent operation he firmly believed I was fully capable of performing, he informed me, that three days ago the Lady Elizabeth, being then dining off roast neck of mutton, did, in the presence of the butler and footman, declare to Edith, that she felt her mind

perfectly at ease about Johnny, when he was in the care of a personage so highly gifted, and so much to be trusted, as Captain Cobb; whereunto the young lady, with what the John above-mentioned alleged was a blush (at which the housemaids giggled), assented. Which small intelligence so affected my weak nerves, that I forgot to order any salad, and was much reproached in consequence.

“A man that knowingly and wilfully, having a roast fowl for dinner, omits salad,” said Ravensworth, with awful solemnity, “must be, for the time being, devoid of all moral sense of the fitness of things; and, as brother officers and fellow-sufferers, at morning parade we wish Cobb a speedy convalescence.”

"You know nothing about it," said Johnny, stoutly. "Salad is not good for the health on some days of the week, and this is one of them."

"You're quite right, Waldgrave," said Jenkins, of the Hundred Hills; "a subaltern should always back his captain through thick and thin, and I don't want any salad, though if there had happened to have been any leeks in the neighbourhood——"

"Leeks!" interrupted Boyd, scornfully, "who ever heard of a Christian eating leeks?"

"I'll tell you what," thundered the grandson of Cadwallader—

"Tell Waldgrave that story about the 87th," interrupted Boyd, adroitly; for right

well knew that astute Ulsterian how to divert the dire wrath of the Achilles of Plinlimmon, who was one of that class whose practices are described by Byron, when he says—

“The wits watched every loophole for their art,
To introduce a bon-mot head and ears.”

“Did you never hear it?” asked Jenkins of Johnny.

“Not that I know of,” said Johnny to Jenkins.

“Of course he never did,” said I; for I wanted to hear how Jenkins would get on with an Irish story.

“Well,” said the narrator, “at Barossa, the 87th became engaged with a body of French, so numerous that they flattered themselves that this solitary English regi-

ment would never close with them, and stood their ground so stoutly, that, before they broke, the 87th actually got within such a distance as brought the bayonets into play, or rather the butt end, for that is the arm the soldier really uses at close quarters; and so, in the *mêlée*, the eagle was captured, and the corps have been called the Eagle Catchers ever since; and they got the eagle on the colours, and appointments, and buttons, before and behind; wherever an eagle could be stuck, there it was, till the corps looked more like a walking aviary than a regiment of Foot Christians. And some time after, when additional honours were heaped on them, and they were given the Prince of Wales's plume, there was no place to put it at all. They were debating it

one day at mess, everybody talking different degrees of nonsense, when a jolly young ensign, recently taken alive in Munster, shouted out from the bottom of the table—

‘I’ll tell ye what we’ll do with the plinme, Currnel,—we’ll stick it in the aigle’s tail, and make a paycock of him.’”

“Upon my word, you get on very well with an Irish story, Jenkins,” said I. “I suppose the Cimbric blood assimilates with Celtic eloquence. I’ll tell you a French one on the same subject. You must know, that in the French service the eagle itself is the point of honour—they care nothing about the colour—and so, whenever a French regiment finds itself getting into trouble, they unscrew the eagle, and somebody carries it away in his pocket. Well, on one occasion,

•

a French regiment in the Russian campaign got into an awful mess, was driven in with the loss of half its men, and, to all appearance, of its eagle. The emperor was as mad as a hatter; it was the beginning of the end, and he had not been used to reverses. The next morning the unfortunate regiment was paraded in close column, other regiments all round to see it disgraced. The emperor, with his hands behind his back, looking thunder-clouds and hurricanes; the staff as grave as if the offending regiment was about to be improved off the face of the earth. The parade was called to attention, and the scene began.

“‘Soldats—qu’avez vous fait,’ said Napoleon, in a deep, sepulchral tone, with a grim and ominous solemnity. ‘Où sont mes aigles?’

“ ‘Tiens, sire,’ said a mad wag of a *porte-étendard*, jumping out of the ranks, and putting his hand in his pocket; ‘On a perdu le bâton, mais voici le coucou,’ and he produced the missing eagle. You may suppose that there was not much more said about lost eagles in the French camp that day, except in the facetious line.”

“It was well for them to have anything to laugh at, poor creatures,” said Jenkins.

“Trust a Frenchman for that,” said Ravenswood. “France is one great national antic, the aberration of creation, and till its mind reaches adolescence, there will be little peace in Europe. She conquers nations as boys rob orchards, and with the same keen sense of the fun of the thing.”

“And the Gaul in Ireland kicks at Eng-

land," said I, "as boys bar out, and with the same perception of ultimate benefit."

I said this to try whether either Boyd or Nugent would show fight; they both spluttered a little, but did not know what to say. I think they were both too young to have acquired the intrepidity of visage and hardihood of assertion requisite on such an occasion. Boyd, indeed, being a northern, held most probably the opinion generally prevalent (and with the most perfect justice) in the province of Ulster, that the welfare of that part of the Green Isle (which, it being the leader and prime mover in all advance or progress, involved the welfare of the whole island) was systematically and suicidally sacrificed by the English government, to the supposed politi-

cal expediency of conciliating those who were determined and solemnly pledged not to be conciliated; and, moreover, Boyd had not a drop of Celtic blood in his veins, being of Scotch origin.

He always wore mourning on the 18th of August, being the day on which, as he alleged, his relative, Lord Kilmarnock, was executed on Tower Hill in 1746. I don't know anything about his family tree, but I observe that the thistle, when it once appears in that character, grows with a very remarkable luxuriance, and I do not believe a word of the relationship any more than I did of Nugent's fabulous descent from Radulphus Fitzlongespé de Nugent, who, in conjunction with Hugh de Lacy (an ominous conjunction of most unheavenly

bodies), roasted alive, and I dare say, eat the monks of Killballybedam, in the days of King Henry II., of blessed and vigorous memory.

“What do you know about Gauls?” asked Jenkins, who perhaps thought their younger brothers the Cimbri might come in for their turn next. “You never had a liberal education.”

“By Jove! no one ever had a more liberal education,” retorted I. “I learned as much as ever I pleased, and no more.”

“What is learning?” asked Ravenswood.

Nobody answered, for nobody knew; so he answered it himself, as he had intended. “Learning is the rent paid by man for occupying nature; the title of the

mind to the estates of thought; the crutch upon which man hobbles through the fields of knowledge."

"Phoo," said the eater of leeks, "that's all your mumble jumble of big words. What's the difference between learning and knowledge?"

"The difference between flower and fruit," replied Ravenswood, filling his glass, with a look at Johnny, to which that infant Bacchus replied by filling his, and swallowing a huge mouthful of fine full-flavoured military sherry; "fools are always learning, but never knowing."

"Faith, they *must be* fools if they're always learning," said Boyd; "after one's learned to take care one isn't cheated, and to make the most of everything one has,


and to do without what one hasn't, I don't see the use of bothering one's brains about the motions of the stars or the bowels of the earth. I'd rather know what the price of consols will be this day month than where the planet Jupiter will be. I'd rather know how to make a good beefsteak pie than be able to chatter 'about the crust of the planet we inhabit,' as the wise men say, instead of calling a spade a spade, and saying the world."

"You'd see some sense in geology, my boy," said Johnny, "if it taught you that what you thought worthless stone was valuable ore."

"'Deed I would not," returned the Hi-berno-Scot, "for I haven't an acre of land in the world."

“Perhaps if you made the discovery on some other man’s land, you might make a valuable purchase,” suggested Ravenswood; “he sees twice who sees first.”

“There’s some sense in that,” replied the prudent youth, and the conversation turned to the last race ball and the beauties that adorned it, which would hardly be interesting to the general reader, but thence it appeared that our young gentlemen had already arrived at the usual military practice I have elsewhere alluded to, of considering the fair ones, who composed the society of the town in which they are quartered, as a bevy of *Odalesques à la Vrai Bréton*.



CHAPTER II.

BAD INTENTIONS AND GOOD FORTUNE—VALUE RECEIVED—THE SCAFFOLD AND THE THRONE—THE SHADOW OF A SPECTRE—IT GLIDES ACROSS THE PATH—THE WHISPER OF INSTINCT—THE VOICE OF WARNING.

I WAS always aware that Edith had a strong taste and, I thought, a very correct taste, for poetry; and I conjectured from that, that she secretly and surreptitiously wrote it herself. I tried to extract some information on the subject from Johnny, but even my unrivalled skill in turning brains

inside out failed there; the fact being, that my careful tuition of that "ingenuous puer" had made him, on many subjects, almost a match for myself. I then tried to bribe him to steal me some, upon which he had the hardihood to turn upon me and say, that the receiver was worse than the thief,—a mode of learning wisdom from the mouths of babes and sucklings that I consider highly detrimental to military discipline, and threatened to begin reading his reports as orderly officer, which rather alarmed him, but did not produce the desired effect.

I was, however, agreeably surprised at finding with what facility I obtained, by fair means, that which had been denied to foul; for, a few days after this, happening

to arrive at Beauchamp Hall earlier than usual, I caught Edith in the act of huddling a number of very suspicious-looking papers into a desk, and immediately set up a piteous whine of entreaty for one, only one, any one, however small. Edith laughed.

“I suppose you will have one in the end, so I may as well give it at once with a good grace,” said she, selecting one—and a good long one, too, and giving it me, with the shadow of a tremor and the sketch of a blush; “of course, you will not be too severe a critic?”

I did not think there was much danger of that; “*Bis dat qui cito dat*,” a golden maxim for those who have anything to give, which I very rarely have, and therefore devote myself principally to receiving.

Then lighted up that bright young eye in pride of
high command,

Then stretched she out that white young arm, as if
within her hand

She held a nation's sceptre ; then suddenly it sank—
A closing gate, a shooting bolt, came like a fetter's
clank.

Well knew that princess-prisoner by what a slender
thread,

Held by no friendly hand, there hung the axe above
her head.

Fast fly the unreal visions, her dreary fate that
mock,

Sweep past in grim procession the headsman and the
block—

The spectre of a mother, with the phantom of a
crown—

The horror of a sister's brow black with a lethal
frown.

Sweep past the holy martyrs in unsepulchred array—
Names written in eternity; but whither marshal
they ?



Must she alone upon the earth, in inexperienced
youth,

Give answer to that question of all questions—
‘What is truth?’

And write the answer in her blood, and write
perchance in vain,

And to its dregs the fiery cup of death untimely
drain?

No wonder, then, the trembling hand, the sudden
painful start,

The never ceasing restlessness, the ever beating heart,
The sunken eye, the gathered brow, the blanched
and faded cheek,

The torture of uncertainty so eloquently speak.

The hand of Death was busy in her house, but what
it did,

For weal or woe, for hope or grief, was from that
maiden hid.

Fate raced with Death—a ghastly race; the nation
looked, and trembled.

What intertangled phantasms around her heart
assembled!

Then looked up that bright young eye in pride
To her command.

Then stretched she out that white young arm,
Within her hand.

She held a nation's sceptre ; then suddenly it saw
A shining gate, a shining bark, came like a fleet
Creak.

Well knew that prisoner-prisoner by what a slow
March.

Here by no friendly hand, there hung the axe
Her head.

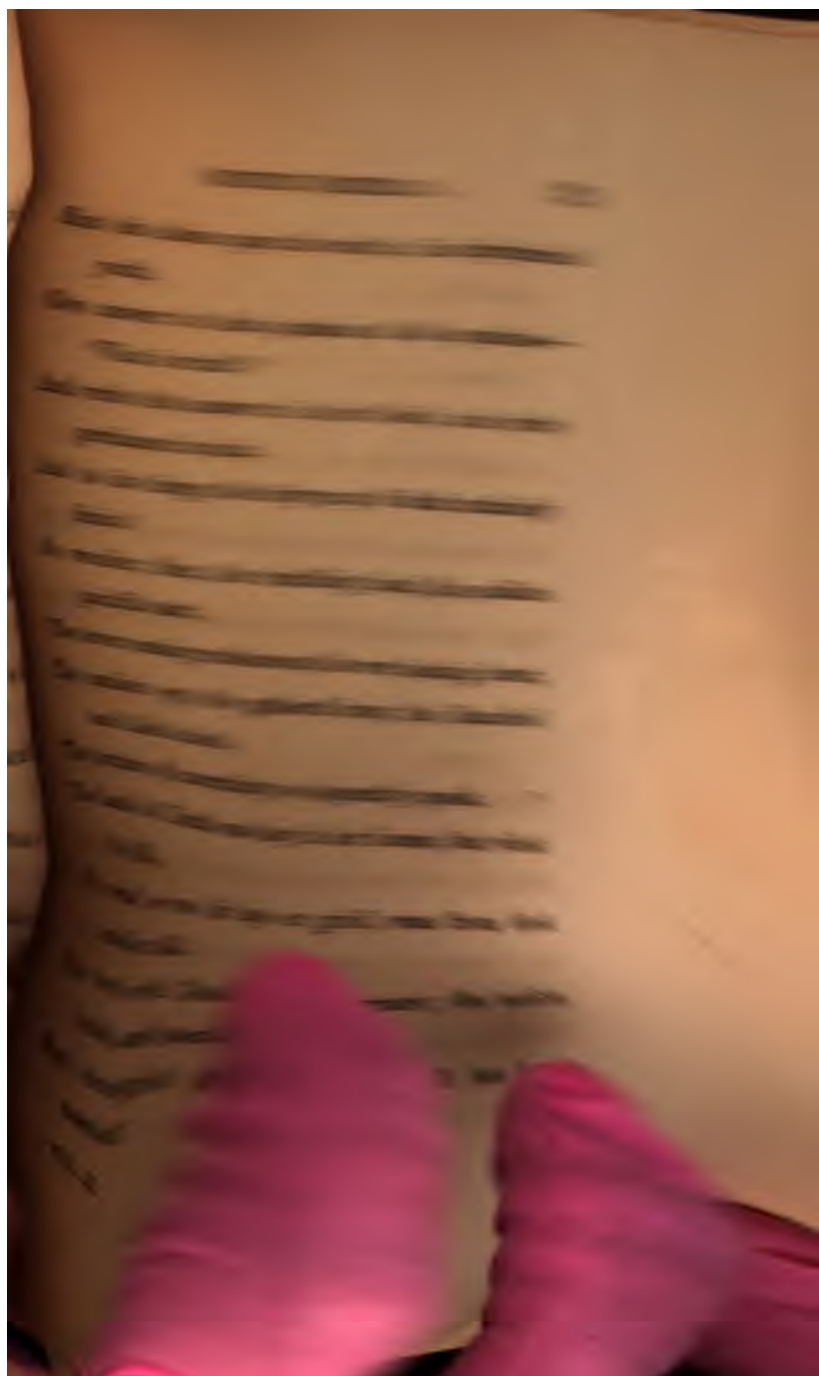
Past by the unreal visions, her dreary fate
Mock,

Sweep past in grim procession the headsman and
Black—

The spectre of a mother, with the phantom
Crown—

The horror of a father's brow black with a
Frown

Sweep past in unrepentant arm
Nameless woe; but whither man



What felt that captive princess in her hour of fate
alone ?

One foot was on the scaffold set, the other—on the
throne.

Hark! on the moonlit clouds of night there comes a
doubtful roll,

Is it the distant thunder?—is it the death-bell's toll?
St. Paul's deep note it is, nought else can match that
ponderous bell ;

That shifting night wind on its wings may bear a
royal knell ;

It crept all solemnly around, like to a nation's
moan,

Spread far and near, o'er all the land, that choral
undertone,

Heavily booming, peal on peal, on many a slumber
broke,

And many a heart to freedom from a nameless
terror woke.

But who shall say what felt that maid, when through
their ancient gate

Came bearing empire or death the messengers of fate!



The trappings of past state they bore—the livery of
woe;

But a measured joy was in every eye, as every knee
bent low.

They bent the knee, they bowed the head; upon that
captive's sight

Came flashing free with royalty a flood of golden
light.

She gazed upon each bended knee, upon each humbled
head,

She felt the hand that grasped the dart was num-
bered with the dead.


She looked upon each humbled front, each reveren-
tial mien;

Her heart waxed high, for then she knew—they
knelt before the Queen."

"I have always felt," said Edith, re-
flectively, "for that period of Queen
Elizabeth's life which immediately preceded
Mary's death, the awful uncertainty, and

the terrible sight of two sisters placed in such a position that the one might sentence the other to execution. But I am afraid that her conduct immediately after her accession goes far to remove any sympathy—it was so insincere, such a want of straightforwardness.”

Edith was arranging her hair at a little looking-glass in the top of her work-box all this time, which attracted my notice to the shape of her head, which appeared to have a peculiar development towards the back, growing apparently broader as it receded. I had my own doubts about its being classic, though her profile certainly was; but it gave me an impression, I do not know why, of being a good honest English head.



"I have my doubts as to whether she *could* have acted otherwise," said I; "she could not have got on at all without *one* bishop to crown her; and she had not one to spare."

"She *ought* to have deceived nobody," said Edith, mildly but firmly; "the end does not justify the means."

"A popish insurrection before she was established in power," persisted I, "might have been successful; and what would have been the consequence of that?"

"Consequences are in other and better hands than ours, Captain Cobb," replied Edith, gravely; "but our conduct is in our own, and for that we are responsible."

I thought it now expedient to hold my tongue. If Queen Elizabeth, ruff, far-

thingale, stomacher and all, had risen bodily from her long repose and entered the room, and offered me the honour of knighthood, I would not have quarrelled with Edith for her; but I could not help thinking that she was most alarmingly conscientious. I wonder what she would have done in the same position. I think she would have done—the bishops and peers, as Queen Elizabeth did.

At this moment Lady Elizabeth entered the room. “I have just received a letter from Mr. Wharton,” said she; “they are coming here next week.”

I do not know what it was sent a sharp, I had almost said pang, certainly a curious and disagreeable sensation through me at this announcement. Nina was

nothing to me, she had not attempted to lure or fascinate me in any shape or way, but still I felt a sort of antipathy (yet unmixed with animosity) such as one may feel with respect to a serpent, however richly hued, glittering, graceful, and even harmless the animal may be. For a moment Edith's eye caught mine, and I fancied I saw in it the same nameless terror darkening the disturbed glance, which just flashed upon me and was gone; but a moment afterwards she looked at me again, and from that time forward, till an unhappy misapprehension occurred, we understood one another by the eye.

“I am always glad to have Nina here,” said Lady Elizabeth; “she makes a house so gay; she is so cheerful and open-hearted.”

"She is very clever," said Edith, coldly.

"She brings a sort of sunshine with her," said the mother.

"She is an excellent musician," rejoined the daughter.

"And is so attentive to her father," quoth the matron.

"She has very pleasing manners," said the maiden; and it was not difficult to perceive that there was a small trifle of difference of opinion between the two.

Lady Elizabeth was, I believe, a very shrewd judge of character, but of course Edith and I were right in our estimate.

"I really do, to a certain extent, like Nina," said Edith to me after her mother was gone; "she is very agreeable, even good-natured; but I have still a nameless

dread of her. I think, once her vanity or her jealousy is touched, she is capable of almost anything; yet I ought not to say that, for I certainly cannot justify it, but still it is my impression."

"Those instinctive impressions are very apt to be correct," said I; "in this case I share it with you; you may rely upon it when minds were served out for the day that Nina was born on, hers got entangled with a cat's, and if you take my advice you will keep a bright look out upon her about Johnny."

"Do you know," replied Edith, "that was just what I was thinking of. I so dread Johnny's getting into any affair of the sort."

Faint shadows of Clementina Mullins,

Mary Anne O'Malley, and others, the pets of the army and widows of the 120th, floated before my eyes for a moment, and I thought how astounded Edith would be if I gave her a glimpse into the confessions of country quarters; but I had no time for that sort of thing, I had a job of my own in hand, for it was not merely about Johnny that I wished a bright look out to be kept upon Miss Nina's proceedings.

"You will find her dangerous," said I; "for with all that pretty manner of hers, she is by no means scrupulous as to what she says or does when she has an object in view, and she has the pertinacity of a limpet."

"I don't think she can produce much effect upon Johnny," said Edith, musingly.

“Don’t be too sure of that,” returned I; “any woman can make any man do what she pleases if she goes the right way about it, and Nina knows the right way as well as any woman in Europe or out of it, and will use any means.”

“Well,” said Edith, hesitatingly, “I think she sometimes does suffer her imagination to overpower her memory; at all events, I shall not forget your caution.”

It was not very long before I learned what abundant reason I had for endeavouring to instil into Edith’s mind a wholesome distrust of Nina, though when I took my leave that day I looked upon it merely as a rational precaution, which became necessary from the uncertainty of Nina’s views, and the impossibility of calculating

what she would do. That she would never be content till she had some flirtation, intrigue, or manœuvre, to excite her, I felt convinced, far from being certain that I might not be the object of it myself, a destination of which I was by no means ambitious.

CHAPTER III.

EXCURSIONS AMONG THE STARS—THE COMET IN
WHITE MUSLIN—SOUNDING THE ALARM—LAISSEZ
ALLER—DEODATUS IN HIS GLORY—CORRESPOND-
ENCE—FASHION AND MATRIMONY—LOVE AND
MATRIMONY—DEODATUS ON COURTSHIP—ANA-
LOGIES AND CONTRASTS.

THE more I reflected upon Nina's appear-
ance upon the scene, as I strolled slowly
homewards, the less I liked it. It was a
beautiful starlight night, and, on any other
occasion, I should have derived a good deal
of innocent gratification from inspecting
the heavens,—wishing myself in the planet

Venus, wondering what the devil a parallax was, and whether any of the stars were really double, and where all the light came from, and what became of it when it was used up.

I do not know but what I might have hit off some very profound theory as to the present inhabitants of the moon, and what number of centuries it would take for the maggots and shellfish therein at present residing, to modulate through mud into limestone, thence into clay, and therefrom into asparagus, or whatever edible herb suits the lunar capacity to form fitting nutriment for the man (or the coming man) that is traditionally said to reside there.

No such visions were vouchsafed to me

this night. The stars were unpropitious. Cassiopeia—the lady in her chair—took form, and feature, and aspect of Nina meaning mischief; there was no luck in the odd number to be found in the belt of Orion; even my old friends the Pointers indicated no good; the Great Bear would not wag his tail; nor could I discover the sweet influence of the Pleiades, and clouds hid the Pole Star, the cynosure of my wishes, as which star I pictured to myself Edith, and Nina as a comet, and repeated the lines,—

“The hour arrived, and it became,
A shapeless mass of wandering flame,
A pathless comet, and a curse,
The menace of the universe.”

In short, I was afflicted with a Ninaphobia,

that dim, uncomfortable presentiment of something coming; and that not pleasant, which I suppose we all have occasionally, and which, *en passant*, I may remark, I treated that night with blue pill, and recommend the treatment to all my friends.

However, this is anticipating. I walked on, and finding no comfort in the stars, betook myself to the earth again. The first point that I considered was, what course I should pursue with regard to Johnny, whether I should caution him about the probable machinations of that glittering young mischief-maker, or leave to his own sagacity to find her out himself. The first seemed the safest; but, on the other hand, I believe there are instances on record of the best advice, given in the best

spirit, not being received precisely as it was meant, and even of its not having produced the desired effect.

On the other hand, if I left him to find her out himself, it was not perfectly clear that his unaided sagacity would be equal to the task. Johnny had a sort of innate reverence for woman, which even the 120th regiment (Camberwell Rangers) had not succeeded in dislodging from that loyal citadel his heart, and which, unfortunately, sometimes extended itself to objects not quite worthy of it.

He was thoroughly unsuspicious by nature. Experience had not as yet taught him caution, and he was no match for a manœuvring angel in white muslin. I thought that, upon the whole, he might as

well be on his guard, and that, by cautioning him in rather a quizzing manner, I might accomplish that purpose without arousing his jealousy about advice.

The next consideration was a serious one. I felt pretty sure that Nina, if baffled by Johnny, would speedily detect my hand in the matter, and, I had very little doubt, would forthwith proceed to return the compliment in kind; and what amount of mischief she might do me with Edith heaven only knew. True, that young lady already distrusted her, but who could tell how soon Nina might induce her to distrust me, or what she might not persuade her to believe when she had effected that object. I know how easy it is for a designing woman to poison the mind of another against a man

by simply telling her stories about him that *cannot* be repeated to him, and consequently cannot be contradicted, disproved, or explained by him, and I had very little doubt but that in case any delicate operation of that sort became expedient, Nina would tell her story in that fine liberal style of narration that produces the greatest possible effect with the smallest expenditure of facts, an accomplishment which I have in some instances observed to flourish in great luxuriance among the more voluble portion of the fairer sex, fostered, I suppose, by their exemption from the jurisdiction of the court of twelve paces, "that remarkable and exclusively Christian practice," as Ravenswood used to call it, "of appealing to the judgment of the devil."

However, I speedily arrived at the conclusion that it was no use thinking; I could not foresee what even a day might bring forth, far less a month; events, as they arose, must be met as best might be; and if a sharp eye, a clear head, a true heart, and clean hands, were to be of no avail against a woman's tongue, it might be an aberration of Providence, but it *should* be no fault of mine.

As I approached our dwelling-place, my Leporello, Deodatus, ever on the watch, surrounded and bejumped upon by all the dogs in the place, with whom he fraternised, pounced upon me with some letters. One of Doddy's greatest enjoyments was, whenever letters arrived for me in my absence, to lie in wait till I returned, that

he might have the dignified gratification of presenting me with those missives, which seemed to have some mystic value in his eyes, that communicated itself to him, the bearer thereof. I think the receipt of a letter addressed to himself would have thrown him into convulsions of delight, a feeling which I rarely myself experience, a certain proportion of mine consisting of bills, a character from which Doddy's correspondence would probably have been exempted by the limited nature of his credit.

"Plase yer honner here they are; one, two, three," said he, spreading them out upon the plate, which he considered it genteel to substitute for the silver salver upon which Ambrose used to present letters to Lady Elizabeth and Edith, an article which

formed no part of my camp furniture, to Doddy's great discomfiture, who always, upon such occasions, possessed himself of some plate or other, and, I believe, would rather have presented the letters to me on the shovel than with his naked hand.

"One, two, three—(down, Towzer!)—I thought you might like to see them afore you went in to the gentlemen—(get out wid ye, Billy)—maybe there's saycrets in them—(lave off bitin' me feet, ye cannibal, Neptune! the curse of Cromwell on ye!—be asy now!)" and he looked wistfully at his clothes, longing, I believe, that he was, for the time, clad in his original rags, that he might have a roll on the grass with the dogs. The first letter that I read was from my lady mother, then disporting herself with

aquatics in the Isle of Wight, that great playground for the players at sailors:—

“MY DEAR SOMERSET,

“I *really wish* you would write a little oftener, as I am sure you must have time; for you can have none of that horrid duty you had in Ireland; or if you could contrive to get even a fortnight's leave, I should be *so glad* if you would come here. *Lady Mesopotamia is here*, surrounded by her usual train of hangers-on, but, of course, very agreeable to me, and I should like you to take this opportunity of making *a friend of her*;—(Make a friend of that terrible woman, that incarnation of grandeur, Lady Mesopotamia! ejaculated I, in horror. I should as soon have thought of nudging the Pope,

or pinching the Queen)—which you know you never can do in London, where *friendships* do not grow indigenously. She sails constantly with *your friend Lord Huddleston*, who has persuaded her to put that confidence in him by a solemn promise that the moment there is any *real* danger *he will take the helm himself*.

“The society is on the pleasantest footing, some of the best families, and a great number of *smart men*. You would be amused, *entre nous*, in your sly, sarcastic way, by the *costume of the ladies*. Some of them wear a sort of refined imitation of those great rough things the men call pea-jackets, or pilot-coats; those worn by our friends are, of course, made of velvet, trimmed with fur and lined with blue silk,

and profusely braided. One I remarked, becoming, indeed, but I should hardly think suited to the sea, of a *rich puce-coloured satin*, lined with rose-coloured silk, and trimmed with lace; pretty, though perhaps eccentric; but the lady who wore it is a bride. Others, again, wear a singular sort of pelisse, which I cannot describe more accurately than as a brown holland dressing-gown; it looks odd, but is worn by people of the highest distinction, and I dare say is *very serviceable* in bad weather, whilst those who do not wear the ordinary sailor's hat, *the 'wide-awake,'* they call it, have a sort of thing like the head of a cab, of green or blue silk, which I think *remarkably unbecoming*, and, indeed, is commonly called an 'ugly,' I think, very

justly. Mrs. Wallingford is here with her two daughters. *Fifty thousand each*, and I really think it is time you should *begin to think of settling in life*. Give my best regards to the Waldgraves, and believe me,

“ My dear Somerset,

“ Your most affectionate mother,

“ CAROLINE CAVENDISH COBB.”

“ P.S. Lord Fitzhammersmith has been here some time, and been *very* attentive to Adeline. I like him *very much indeed*; he is a most *superior young man*, and, I am sure, a very *rising* one.”

If he rises to the hook, I suppose that will do, said I to myself.

I believe the Isle of Wight might have

slipped its moorings in the Solent, and commenced investigating the bed of the Atlantic, before I would have left Carlton. Mrs. Wallingford and her two rich daughters were abominations in my eyes. What on earth did I want with fifty thousand pounds? I hoped that Lady Caroline did not intend this as a hint for me; at all events, if she did I would not take it, so I crumpled up the letter in very virtuous dudgeon, and proceeded to open another, which bore Hawkins's well-known handwriting. It ran thus:—

“DEAR COBB,

“As usual in perplexity, I come to you for advice (it's a common practice, and a very sensible one, said I to myself, only I

wish they'd remember the fee). I am on my beam ends, and do not clearly understand how to right myself. My conscience reproaches me. (Unless I know much less of Hawkins than I suppose myself to know, thought I, he must be very far gone in love to discover that he has a conscience.) I feel that I paid much more attention to Ellen O'Reilly than circumstances warranted (I don't clearly see what circumstances had to say to the matter, thought I); and I think it possible she may have attached more weight to some things that I said than I intended at the time. Still I cannot deny, that much was said which was hardly fair if more was not meant; and what I want to put to you, is, whether you do not think that, as a man of honour

(Phew! ejaculated I; here's this accomplished hypocrite wants to take credit for doing, as a man of honour, what he's dying to do upon any terms. A man of honour, indeed! here's a mash of laurels and orange flowers. Well, I dare say I may have deceived myself sometimes. Let's see what he has to say for himself). Much was said (I dare say) that was hardly fair if more was not meant (devil doubt it); and what I wish to put to you is (Is it?) whether you do not think that as a man of honour (Oh, indeed!) I have any other course to pursue than to offer to that young lady the only reparation (that's a capital word—reparation, it'll do for anything, from a wink to a wedding ring), the only reparation in my power—

my hand, with a heart of which she's already possessed of the greater part. (Well, I'm glad he's found it out, but he's taken his time about it.) I believe I shall best consult my own character, and my own happiness, by so doing; but I wished before taking such a decided step, to have the benefit of your judgment. Of course I know that to enjoin secrecy and discretion to you would be superfluous (of course, it would be about as sensible as to request a duck to swim), but pray let me have your opinion as soon as possible. I can do nothing here. I cannot collect my thoughts or direct my attention to anything. The trout laugh at me, the snipe make game of me, and my subaltern will keep bothering me about the fashionable news. I wish I

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was richer, but I cannot help that; at all events, my income is more than Mr. O'Reilly's living, so there will be no fault in that respect. I hope the world goes well with you; so believe me,

“ My dear Cobb,

“ Your most sincere friend,

“ JAMES HAWKINS.”

Well, James, my boy, you're fairly landed, thought I. I'm sure I wish I was; however, it will be time enough to answer you to-morrow. And so I entered the house. It was, however, later than I had supposed, and the two others had gone to bed. I thought I had better do so too, but as I left the little room we had christened with the military designation of the mess-room, I stopped for a moment.

I stopped, literally because a particular form of answering Hawkins' letter occurred at that moment to my mind (I may observe, *en passant*, that, like most first impulses, it was the true one, and that I followed it subsequently, and not without success), but Doddy, who it seems had set me like a setter into the room, and lay watching like a lurcher till I came out again, interrupted my momentary pause otherwise.

"Will I fetch your cigar-case, your honour?" said he, nowise doubting that it was that weed imported by Raleigh, that soother of sorrows (and muddler of brains), that occupied my thoughts; and as this young unskilful suggester of sin put the thought into my head, I nodded assent, and away he scuttled and scrambled to fetch me that

Pandora's box, which I always say is a sort of thing that I by no means want or require, but never like being entirely without.

"Who gave you those flowers?" asked I, when he returned, observing that his button-hole was profusely adorned with flowers that I was convinced he had not picked up in the fields.

"Miss Maria," replied he, with the semblance of a blush, that astonished me more than a flash of lightning would have done.

"And pray who is Miss Maria?" asked I.

"Sure, she's Miss Edith's lady's maid," answered he, rather shyly.

"And how do you persuade her to give you flowers?"

"I plays tricks for her, sir, and does her odd jobs for her."

"What do you mean by playing tricks?" asked I.

"Well, sir, I mane tachin' the dogs to beg," returned he; "puttin' walnut-shells on the cat, standin' on my head, and the like."

"And what are the odd jobs you do for her?" asked I, rather interested in Doddy's characteristic courtship.

"Makin' little baskets for her, sir," he answered; "gatherin' groundsel for her canary, coaxin' the cook out of goodies for her, and them sort of things."

"You may go to bed, now," said I, rather struck with the peculiar analogy which had just been brought to light between master

and man. I wonder, thought I, if I were to stand upon my head—well, perhaps it might not produce the desired result.

It is a great point to distinguish oneself, certainly, in certain eyes, but the mode differs in different cases.

CHAPTER IV.

**SOUNDING THE ALARM—THE DOMINION OVER THE
EARTH—THE GREAT CASE OF BULL G. BRAIN—
NOTICE OF EJECTMENT—THE FEAR AND THE
DREAD—"A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT"—
TRUST AND DISTRUST—MODEL CORRESPONDENCE
THE DESCENT OF THE DESTROYER—THE MARK
OF HIS HAND.**

"JOHNNY, my boy," said I, when I came down to breakfast, "look out for squalls, be promptly wise, prepare for cavalry, keep your weather eye open,—you never were in such imminent danger before, since the creation of cats; 'latet anguis in

herba'—there is a snake in the grass—there is a lion in the path—there is a scorpion among the flowers, and a blight upon the blast."

"Suppose you try and speak sense," said Ravenswood; "and let us know what the matter really is. Is Clementina Mullins going to prosecute him for breach of promise, or is she come here to carry him off bodily to Merrion Square, and matrimony, and whiskey-punch?"

"Clementina Mullins, of the wandering eye, sits in the middle of her web, in Merrion Square, like the blue poplin spider that she is, with great dragoon flies entangled in her meshes," replied I; "but Johnny, my boy, if you have got such a thing as a heart, as I know you have,—

"I mean animal?" said I.

"The elephant, to be sure," replied he, "unless you call the whale an animal!"

"Perhaps I might," replied I; "but we won't dispute that point; we'll take the elephant for the present.

"How far do you think a rifle ball will go into an elephant?"

"Not very far, I should suppose," replied Johnny, brightening up with an interest in the subject. "How the deuce do they manage to shoot them?"

"I'll tell you," said I. "When the elephant sees the hunter standing, perhaps all alone, with no arms but just his rifle, and the brute means mischief, he comes towards the man with his trunk up in the air, trumpeting, and looking like a great

mountain that would crush everything by mere weight. It would take a light six-pounder to make any impression on him then; but, nevertheless, he has man and man's skill to deal with, and he has not many minutes to live. In the front of the elephant's skull, a little above the eyes, there is an orifice in the bone about the size of our hand, and there the brain has no protection, except the skin; well, he does not show this place now, nor any other vulnerable point, for he has his head up in the air; and you would suppose there could only be one issue to this single combat; but, nevertheless, the hunter knows what that issue will certainly be, and he stands there as cool as an iceberg, for he knows that it is the instinct of the

beast at the moment of attack to lower his head, and when he does so he's booked; and accordingly, just as the elephant is, to all appearance, about to crush the man, down goes his head, thereby showing the soft place—crack! goes the rifle—and the great unwieldy mass rolls over, for the ball is in his brain."

"It takes coolness, skill, and courage, to do that, nevertheless," said Ravenswood; "no flinching allowed, and no mistake."

"A man must be a man to assert his preeminence over brutes," replied I.

"I have heard it asserted," said Ravenswood, "that it is considered among burglars that the most ferocious house-dog will not attack a perfectly naked man."

"Yes," I answered; "it is the fear and

the dread that operates then; there are not more than three or four animals that will, unless under peculiar circumstances, attack a man or stand his attack voluntarily. The lion and the tiger wont, unless when they are mad with hunger, or have already tasted human blood."

"No," said Ravenswood, "none of the cat tribe will."

"There is one that will," said I; "so Johnny, be on your guard, for you will have soon to deal with the cat of all cats, the queen of the cats is coming to Beauchamp Hall."

"Who?" asked Johnny.

"Nina Wharton."

"Who?" asked Ravenswood, and turned as pale as death.

“ Mr. and Miss Wharton,” replied I, in some surprise.

Ravenswood made no answer, but soon after left the room, and I commenced eating my breakfast, lecturing Johnny, and otherwise doing my duty to myself and my neighbour.

“ What makes you take such a dislike to Nina, Cobb?” asked Johnny; “ I’m sure she is always very friendly towards you, and always speaks well of you; it’s very ungrateful on your part.”

“ Johnny, my boy,” I replied, “ a cat may be a most respectable cat, and a terrier may be a most respectable terrier, but you can seldom bring them together without a breach of the peace; I should be very happy to adore Nina, providing that she would never come within ten miles of me.”

"What harm she does you I cannot for the life of me make out," said he; "you never had a repulse from her, indeed, you were hardly civil to her yourself at the rectory."

"Did you ever see a live shell, Johnny?" asked I.

"To be sure I have," replied he.

"I don't believe that you ever did," I returned; "but that's a trifle; you see a live shell, and it's as quiet as a lamb, but you know that the fuse is burning away, and that sooner or later that shell will explode, and then there'll be Old Nick to pay, and no pitch hot; now, Johnny, as certain as I am that that shell will explode, so certain am I that sooner or later Nina Wharton will do me some great mischief."

"I didn't know that you were such a fool," replied Johnny, innocently opening his eyes to their full extent, and looking as if he thought some variety of mild lunacy had seized upon his military pastor and master; "why should she do you any harm?—in the first place, she hasn't the wish; in the second place, she hasn't the power."

"How do you know she hasn't the power?" asked I.

"Because I know she hasn't," returned Johnny.

"Can you count the sands of the sea, Johnny, or limit a woman's tongue, Johnny? Will the Ethiop change his skin, Johnny, or the leopard his spots, Johnny?"

"I don't see what harm she can do you,"

persisted he; "if she does talk about you, she can say nothing against you."

"It's very easy to *say* things against one," said I, significantly; "nothing easier."

"I don't know that," replied the youth, flushing with honest indignation; "I have seen more of you in all times and places than ever Nina would if she lived to be as old as Methuselah, and I should be puzzled to find anything to say against you."

"Thank you for your good opinion, Johnny," returned I, rather flattered, to say the truth, at this little bit of spontaneous combustion on Johnny's part; "but, Johnny, though I do not say that I have ever detected Nina in a falsehood, I don't think that it is off the cards her resorting to a little rhetorical artifice if it so suited her."

"I don't think that is fair by her," answered Johnny, gravely; "you admit that you know of no falsehood on her part and yet you attribute untruth to her; that's not like you, Cobb."

"I admit that I do not *know* that she is not to be believed, but I know that she is a manœuvrer, and a girl that manœuvres in small things will lie when she comes to matters that she cares about. A manœuvre is nothing but a practical lie, in civil life at least, for in our trade manœuvres are uncommonly practical realities, and sometimes very alarming ones too."

"Well, I think her manœuvres are very pretty," said unsophisticated Johnny.

"You would not think so if they were directed against yourself," returned I;

"but however, that's not *your* danger; it will be quite the other way."

I thought I had given Johnny enough advice for the present, and so left him alone, though I had not quite succeeded in reconciling my experience of the past with his expectation for the future. I then proceeded to answer Hawkins, a task which was much facilitated by the circumstance of my being perfectly aware of how he wished to be advised. Perhaps the reader would like to see my letter; it will not occupy much of his valuable time:—

"MY DEAR HAWKINS,

"When in doubt, win the trick.

"Yours sincerely,

"SOMERSET CAVENDISH COBB."

The answer to my lady mother was, of course, of a more suitable length. I rather think she would have considered anything very short as rather vulgar, and would have been horrified at the manifestation of any such worse than false doctrine, heresy, and schism on my part.

“MY DEAR MOTHER,

“Nothing would give me greater pleasure than joining the brilliant circle which you describe as assembled at Cowes (excepting, perhaps, quizzing their dresses), but, unhappily (the hypocrite that I was), the stern call of duty confines me to the bleak rocks of Derbyshire. I am sure, however, that I should feel dreadfully alarmed at the presence of Lady Mesopotamia, though I

am fully sensible of the advantage that it would be to me to be on a footing of intimacy with that august personage. It would give me the greatest pleasure to be a witness of Huddleston's heroism and seamanship in case of danger, providing I could survey the scene from the shore, or, at all events, from the deck of another yacht. I am sure that we ought to be grateful, above all things, to Fitzhammer-smith for his attentions to Adeline; it must cost him no end of labour, considering his lameness and his bad cough, besides the mortification of his most tender glances going astray in that squint he has. I hope Adeline *likes him extremely, too*; as our philosophical neighbours say, *tous les goûts sont respectables*. I shall duly deliver your

message to the Waldgraves, who are kindness itself to me. Lady Elizabeth often tells me of the magnificent entertainments at which you and she used to meet in the time of the Regency, when Fashion was the fourth estate of the realm; days which, I fear, are fled for ever. Edith is very much improved; indeed, I think her rather a nice girl. If I remember right, she was a bit of a favourite of yours. Will you tell Adeline that I have taught my horse to dance beautifully. If I can manage to get away for a few days, I shall hasten to join you at Cowes. Give my love to Adeline and Gundreda, and believe me, my dear mother,

"Your most affectionate and dutiful son,

"SOMERSET CAVENDISH COBB."

“P.S. I have not seen either of the Miss Wallingfords (and what was more, as I resolved at the time, had not the slightest idea of ever seeing them, having made up my mind to leave them to the serious young nobleman for whom their excellent and highly-principled mother, daughter of Sir Timothy Dumble, Bart. and brewer, destined them)—and can, therefore, form no opinion as to what I might think of them; but I shall give your wishes respecting my settling in life my best consideration; indeed, I have been thinking about the subject a good deal of late, and am rather of your opinion respecting its expediency.”

Having completed, and duly sealed and directed these documents, I committed them to the charge of Doddy, who grinned

from ear to ear on seeing the name of Hawkins on the cover of one of them.

“It’ll be a great comfort to him, sir, to hear from you in that lone place, and he in love, too, poor gentleman. I wonder will he get lave to marry her,” added he, *sotto voce*, as he trotted away.

I suppose he’s got his own leave, thought I, as I watched Doddy proceeding, after the manner of his nation, to execute the mission entrusted to his charge; that is to say, stopping to peep at something here, to talk to somebody there, to ask a question of one, and to perform an antic for another, instead of simply, as an ordinary Saxon would have done, going to put the letters in the post-office. I have no doubt, when he got there he inquired of the postmistress whether she

thought they would go safe, whether she knew Captain Hawkins, or Lady Caroline Cobb; and as she probably did not, gave her whatever information he could think of, or invent on the subject, together with a sketch of the rise and fall of the family of MacCarthy, the death of the great chieftain of that name, a sketch of the glories of O'Toole, and some insight into the habits of Hugh O'Neil.

Johnny went over to Beauchamp Hall, and I saw him no more that day. Ravenswood had, as I have already said, disappeared immediately after breakfast, and had not re-appeared when dinner-time arrived. Now all three of us were irregular in our habits of returning to dinner. Johnny constantly going home, without knowing

whether he would dine at Carlton or at Beauchamp Hall; the same applying to me—and Ravenswood often taking long and solitary rambles, and not returning till eight or nine o'clock, having got something to eat, somehow or other, at some time of the day. In consequence of all this, waiting for one another would have been endless, to say nothing of unprofitable and irritating, and we had come to the agreement, that whenever seven o'clock arrived, whoever were present should sit to dinner, without reference to the absent; and, accordingly, when dinner was ready I sat down without troubling my head about either of my friends. A solitary dinner does not commonly last very long, and it was yet early in the evening when I prepared to sally

forth for a walk, to which exercise there was every temptation in that neighbourhood, from the great beauty and variety of the scenery, but had hardly got a hundred yards from the house, when I perceived a crowd approaching, evidently in a state of great excitement, and bearing something on what seemed a door. As they were clearly directing their steps towards our quarters I returned, and found that the burden was the inanimate body of Ravenswood.

He had been found in a deep glen, that was known by the name of Hawkdale, a scene of remarkable beauty, about three miles off, lying on his side, as if he had dropped from a stone seat upon which he had been sitting. There was no appearance

of violence. If in any struggle, nothing to induce any belief that this visitation was other than a fit of some kind; his limbs were flexible but remained in any position in which they were placed; his eyes were open, seemingly fixed upon some object, yet, on all appearance, unconscious; his countenance was ~~staid~~, indeed almost flushed; and when laid on the bed he seemed neither to hear, see, nor feel.

I was exceedingly alarmed at this, not having any very lively faith in the village surgeon who attended us, for whom, however, I sent immediately; but, before he arrived, any immediate demand for his services was passed; for, after lying motionless and insensible for about ten minutes, Ravenswood suddenly heaved a deep sigh,

looked inquiringly around him, and asked,
“Is she gone?”

“Who?” returned I.

“How long have I been here?” inquired
he, coming more and more to himself.

“Only a few minutes,” replied I.

“How did I get here?”

“The country people brought you in,”
said I, sitting down by the bed-side.

“From Hawkdale?” asked he.

I nodded.

“Oh, my God! my God!” said he, turning
from me.

On the arrival of the surgeon, there was
little more to be done, except to persuade
him to undress and go to bed, which accom-
plished we left him to himself.

CHAPTER V.

THE POISONED ARROW—THE BAITED HOOK—ORATORY IN EXERCISE—JOHNNY IN ORDER OF BATTLE—THE POULTRY IN DANGER—THE SPIRIT OF HELIOGABALUS—THE STAGES OF CREATION—THE MACHINERY IN THE MIND—THE PAST AND THE PRESENT—THE RACE WITH THE THUNDERSTORM.

STRANGE thoughts kept hovering over me that night. Ravenswood's manifest agitation at hearing Nina's name at breakfast had not escaped me; his immediate appeal to that soother of trouble—solitude, and his mysterious illness, now began to connect

themselves in my mind with his prolonged and unaccountable leave of absence, and I could not help a vague suspicion that he had been one of Nina's victims, though I had no means of conjecturing how, or where, or when.

He had, as I have already said elsewhere, gone on leave in April, on what is facetiously and officially termed in the army "urgent private affairs," and I now began to suspect that his was really urgent; he had been suddenly taken seriously ill, though no one knew exactly what was the matter with him, the medical certificates, upon which his leave had been prolonged until he found us at Derby, simply stating that he laboured under a severe nervous affection which rendered the care and watchfulness of his own

family necessary, a statement which we charitably voted a mild formula for expressing delirium tremens; but when he joined he certainly was, as we all remarked, a changed man.

When I went to see him the next morning, he was perfectly collected; and excepting for a haggard look, and perhaps something approaching to wildness in his eye, no one would have supposed that he could have suffered the mysterious and alarming visitation of the night before. His first anxiety was as to whether he had *said* anything during his state of insensibility, and upon my being in a position to give him full assurance that he had been perfectly speechless from the time the country people found him, with the one exception

of the question, "Is she gone?" he seemed much relieved in his mind.

"It is a merciful providence," said he, not even under these circumstances losing his habitual peculiarities of expression, "that imposes silence when it withdraws consciousness,—that draws up the draw-bridge when the sentinel is no longer at his post, and closes the communication when it can no longer be guarded. Cobb," continued he, solemnly (alarming me exceedingly,) "I will trust you; most men do; they say that what is spoken to you will go down unspoken to your grave. I long for some one to trust, and God knows I can put little trust in woman, the natural confidant of man in his troubles. When you mentioned that name at breakfast yesterday morning,

I felt as if a burning shot had passed through my heart,—as if a mocking demon with a barbed dart had risen from the earth. And she so near. I wish I was at the uttermost end of the earth, and yet for the life of me I could not stir from this spot: it is a fascination, a delusion. One looks at the beauty and the bloom, the freshness and the fragrance, and thinks not of the serpent that lurks among the fruits. Caddy, never man loved woman as I loved Nina Wharton. If days of wretchedness and nights of sleeplessness; if the feeling, the burning feeling, that only one human creature in the wide world was aught to me, and all the rest mere dross and unreality; if the longing to die for her, the hoping to live for her, the craving to see her, the

yearning to hear her, 'the desire and the hope, and the despair and the devotion, from that first day that, blinded and mad, I felt that I was no longer my own master—no longer myself—no man, but a slave,—until that last black day that, deserted—nay, worse, jeered and scorned by her, I deemed myself abandoned of heaven, and turned over to the mockeries of hell; if all this was love, then I loved truly, and yet loved in vain. To no man on earth but you would I have said all this; but you will hear, and if you do not comfort will not betray. Yet I was not to blame. No man on earth could have suspected the falsehood and treachery that lurked under that deceitful loveliness. You smile; perhaps you have detected the claws of the siren. But

your eyes are sharper, and—pardon me—harder than mine.”

“I have had my suspicion,” replied I; “though sorry indeed I am to find that the confirmation is to come through the sufferings of a friend; but I never thoroughly trusted her.”

“Would that I had not!” groaned Ravenswood; “yet who could have failed to trust her? the thousand little ways that she had of indicating her preference,—the honied words, the tremulous but still repeated grasp of the hand; the eye, now fixed, and now cast down in such a sweet confusion,—who could have believed that these were but the baits to a hook as cold, and as sharp, and as hard, and as barbed as steel? and then, when she refused me,—the mockery of tell-

ing me that a short flirtation with an officer was not to be held as a promise of marriage! As if part of one's duty was to be tortured by one's friends, as well as butchered by one's enemies."

"I am afraid we are not all of us altogether blameless on that head ourselves," said I; "we, too, sometimes mix the trade of slayers of men with the recreation of lady-killing."

"I never did," said Ravenswood; "though I do not know now whether I shall not begin to try my hand; I am sure I have good excuse—that devil's justification—that he may accuse the more surely. I have had enough to drive me mad,—enough to haunt me to death. Have you seen her yet?"

"She has not arrived yet," answered I.

"How long does she remain at Beauchamp?"

"Three weeks or a month, I believe," I answered; "but I am by no means sure."

"As long as she can amuse herself," said he, bitterly; "can catch fools to torture, flies to impale."

"It will not be my fault if she subjects Johnny to that operation," said I; "and I am by no means sure that she does not intend something of the sort."

"Have you warned him of her character?" asked Ravenswood, eagerly; "does he know what he has to expect?—God forgive me for talking so of her."

"I have warned him," I replied; "though with what effect I do not exactly know; I

cannot persuade him to take the same view that I do, but his sister does, and perhaps sooner or later he will."

"Sooner or later he will," said the other; "but I should prefer sooner; however, I do not see any use in lying in bed all day;" a remark which I considered in the light of a hint to me to leave him to himself, which I did accordingly; and he soon afterwards joined me at breakfast—pale, indeed, and feeble, but apparently not otherwise the worse for his attack.

I believe a good deal of Ravenswood's energetic outburst of indignant eloquence arose from the circumstance of his being in bed at the time. I never saw a man whose tongue did not exhibit symptoms of liberation from constraint, sympathetic with the

freedom of the body from the restraint of clothes. The Duke of Wellington is short and sharp, because the normal state of a Field Marshal is to be buttoned up to the throat. I do not believe any one ever made a good speech in chain armour. The "helm and hauberk's gilded mail" cannot, in my opinion, conduce to elocution in the wearer, however the learning that celebrated ode, in which it appears together with the she-wolf of France, may, in the ingenuous (and exceedingly tiresome) youth who recites it to an admiring circle of friends and relations.

I think a good-sized blanket, with a skewer through it at the neck, would be a good working costume for the hustings. I know I never could have penned these con-

fessions in any other dress than a middle-aged dressing-gown and slippers; and I do not believe the stream of Ravenswood eloquence would have flowed half so free had he been properly dressed for morning parade at the time. We hear of native eloquence, which simply means eloquence in buff. Oratory holds a high place in the opinion of the Red Indian, who considers a few beads and feathers a reasonable allowance of clothing; but there is little thought of oratory in the mind of the Esquimaux who is covered with seal-skins.

We sent Johnny out to hold the parade, which that zealous young officer enlivened with the manual and platoon exercise, and I believe would have marched the company

past in slow and quick time, if, after the necessary points the bugler and the sergeant to command had been deducted, there had remained any men to march past; failing which, he formed line with his right resting on the pump, retired by echelon of sub-division upon the coal-shed; and having, by a masterly movement, changed front in his centre, charged in an oblique direction across the yard, and, firing a volley (of snappings) into an adjacent poultry-yard, whose inmates, two washer-women and an urchin, when the men came to the present, raised a shout of terror, in the idea, I believe, that a real volley was about to sweep them off the face of the earth,—retired and fired by successive sections, and closed a short but brilliant campaign

under the walls of the hen-house, where he dismissed the men. I dare say he enjoyed it very much; if so, it is lucky for him; tastes differ. Ravenswood looked wistfully at him once or twice, when he returned from his mimic razzia, as if he wished to say something to him, but thought it not advisable.

“Why, Johnny,” said I, “if you astonish the natives in that unceremonious manner, we shall be prosecuted as a nuisance.”

“Did you hear how those old fools jabbered and howled?” said he, indignantly, “as if any harm was likely to happen when I was there.”

“You put them in deadly fear, nevertheless, Johnny, my boy,” I returned;

"and I'm not clear whether, of the two, fear isn't worse than danger."

"Of course it is," remarked Ravenswood, bitterly. "Fear is the feminine of danger, therefore the worse."

"Eh! Latin grammar of early school," said Johnny; "that'll do. Give me some tea. I wonder could you tell me what's the masculine for tea?"

"Brandy-and-water," coolly replied Ravenswood, as he filled Johnny's cup, and then, rising from the table, sauntered quietly out.

"Cobb," said Johnny, having carefully watched the door till it closed behind Ravenswood, "do you know I rather think you were right about Nina."

"I was pretty certain I was right," said

I; "pretty certain at the time we were talking about her, but now I KNOW that I was. Mark my words, I KNOW."

"Yes, I am beginning to think so myself," said the young rogue, fancying that he could impose upon me as an original discovery of his own the very impression which I had intended and arranged should be conveyed to him through Edith; "but they desired me to tell you that you must mind and come to dinner on Monday to meet them; there'll only be old Hargreaves and his daughter.

"Who is old Hargreaves?" asked I.

"He is a retired cotton-spinner, I believe," replied Johnny; "but he does a great deal of good here, and understands all about steam-engines, and the balance of

trade and exchanges, and political economy and statistics, and that sort of rubbish, and my mother wants him for Mr. Wharton; I believe he likes that sort of thing; and Lady Elizabeth says I'm no company for him, for which the Lord be praised. I dare say you'll like him too. I suppose somebody must look after things of that sort."

"Somebody must drive the coach, Johnny," I answered, "and the better the coachman understands his business, the more safety for the passengers."

"That's that great genius, Ravenswood, has bit you with a mad epigram," said Johnny; "however, I'll forgive you this time if you'll let us have tripe for dinner to-day."

“Tripe, you young epicure,” returned I, “you infant Heliogabalus, you want tripe for dinner, do you? boiled four hours, with a rich purée of mushrooms, eh? and the large flaps grilled, lying on top of it, eh? and fried bread all round, eh? That’s what you’re thinking of, and almost before you have swallowed your breakfast, too, you irreclaimable young sensualist.”

“Well, don’t jaw, but send out for the tripe,” replied my undutiful ensign; and having complied with his orders, I heard no more of him till the time for eating it arrived.

I found Ravenswood sauntering moodily about; and thinking that anything was better for him than solitude, proposed a walk of about six miles, to an old castle, now in ruins, a good bracing mountain

walk, likely to do him much more good, all circumstances considered, than his own thoughts. The same unfortunate subject was still uppermost in his mind.

"Is that young lady to come soon?" asked he.

"She comes on Monday," replied I; "I am to-meet her at dinner.

"You know her?" continued he.

"Yes, I saw a good deal of her at Ballymacrocrodile, at the rectory," replied I. "Indeed, I made her acquaintance before by running up against the carriage; and as my jaunting car was disabled, they took me on in their carriage. It was at the time that Johnny was laid on his back by locked jaw."

"And what was your first impression of her character?" asked he.

“A very unfavourable one,” I answered; “there was an expression in her countenance that I never thoroughly got over.”

“Ah!” he answered, “I have heard that said before. I wish I had believed it the first time. Belief is the word of command that sets the mind in order of battle! would to heaven I had obeyed it, the fool that I was!”

“My dear fellow,” replied I, “there are things that are beyond our own control, and we are not to blame ourselves for not controlling them any more than we are to blame ourselves if that rock got way upon it, and came thundering down upon our heads.”

“I wonder which would be the greatest calamity,” said he, looking up at the rock,

which certainly did look somewhat threatening, for it completely overhung the little path upon which we were moving.

I myself had no doubt whatever as to which I should have considered the greatest calamity; squashed by a rock is as irretrievable as spilt milk, but then I was not at that time suffering the actual reverse that Ravenswood was, and "he jests at scars that never felt a wound." I thought the huge gaunt pinnacle of grey limestone, that towered so menacingly above us, likely to do much more harm to my head, if so evilly disposed, than was ever likely to accrue to my heart from any specimen of animated marble, however bright and cold. It, however, changed the current of Ravenswood's thoughts altogether.

"There," said he, "stands one of Nature's milestones, by which we may measure the course of creation through time, the scale whose inches are centuries. What millions upon millions of our puny lifetimes, and our wretched laws, must have passed away since the time that the base of that rock was living and sentient beings, and the world was in its grub stage."

"In what stage is it in now, then?" I inquired.

"In the chrysalis," he answered, "wrapped up in rags, cumbered in clay. The free and beautiful winged creature of life is in the womb of futurity—the Psyche is yet to come—her shadow is already cast before."

"How?" I asked, too much interested in

my friend's mystic, yet not always baseless speculations.

“The shadow of the All Grasper is even now stealing over the soul of the world,” returned he; “that mystic communion which enables one mind to enter another, and reflect it, shows itself already in dim and fitful revelations; yet not the less truly the dawning of the dayspring gleams on the horizon from the yonder world; yet dawn it is, and day follows dawn very surely, yet not very slowly.”

“Well now, Ravenswood,” said I, for I fully understood what he alluded to, “are you really and truly in your heart a believer in clairvoyance? Do you believe that a person in a particular state can really discern what is going on in another part of the world?”

“Does the fish see the river it returns to with unerring instinct? Do the migratory birds see the country hundreds of miles beyond the horizon to which they steer?” replied he. “On what ground are we to assume that no more senses are ever to be developed in us than the five ordinary ones that we suppose we are always to be confined to? I know to my cost that there are circumstances under which one discovers undreamed of capacity for feeling and suffering—why not for knowing? From the earliest ages there have been dim traditions of men gifted with extraordinary, if not supernatural powers, or cursed with afflictions beyond ordinary human endurance. The Prophet and the Pythoness, the Urim and Thummim of the Hebrew,

the Oracle of the Heathen, what were they but human creatures, or at all events, earthly existences possessed of a sixth sense? We stand in the same relation to them as a man born blind would to us. Why, when everything points to increased and increasing development, are the elements to aid the development to be withheld?"

"Do you believe that the second sight of the Highlander really existed?" I asked.

"With certain reservations I do," he answered; "I do not believe every case I hear of second sight, but I do believe that something of the sort existed, and that it was in some degree analogous with clairvoyance, though neither in one case

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nor the other do I believe that we know the exact extent to which it was correct, nor can we protect ourselves against occasional imposture. Nor do I think that occasional or frequent cases of failure invalidate the general position, that something of the sort is in the world, for none of our faculties are always in the same state of working order; that varies with circumstances, with the state of bodily or mental health, and all are alike liable to be weakened by exhaustion; and there is no reason why clairvoyance should be excepted from this rule; though far beyond such mental powers as have been as yet given to the human race, it does not profess to be infallible."

"Its friends say so," observed I.

"Its friends are fools," answered he, impatiently. "Is anything human infallible,—sight, hearing, memory, judgment? More than human it may be, without professing to omniscience."

I did not consider myself competent to give an opinion on that sorely vexed question, animal magnetism; nor do I think Ravenswood would have paid much attention to anything I could have said; indeed, he was clearly in a state of excitement, more violent than anything I had ever seen him in before. Formerly, I had always considered him as a clever but impassible man—a curious study of a head, without much heart to study. He seemed, however, to have been exhausted by his own fire on the subject of the MYSTERIOUS GIFT, and walked

on in silence till he reached the castle, which was the object of our walk.

There was not much remaining of what had been Hortington Castle. Part of the keep, whose massive walls had been a match for Time and Cromwell,—both great destroyers, and both great restorers, in their several ways,—girt with some grassy mounds the graves of bygone walls; and a gateway, still perfect, looked down from the rugged spur of a ridge of limestone hills upon the still flourishing village that nestled (and spun cotton) under its shadow. The past and the present were brought fairly face to face, and the past and the present in collision raise thoughts of the future in the human mind, as surely as flint strikes fire from steel.

"I wonder," said my companion, "which system will work best in the long run,—the small with duties to the great, and the great with responsibilities to the small, or every man for himself, and God for us all—or otherwise, as the case may be?"

"Why, my opinion," I said, "upon that subject is, that as to the matter of living upon very indifferent food, in a gloomy-vaulted edifice, with a wet ditch round it, it is time to commence that sort of life after one has been convicted of felony."

"I think you belong to the nineteenth century, Cobb," replied Ravensworth.

"I hope so," I replied. "I should be frightened into fits if any other century came to claim me. One might go farther and fare worse."

“One might fare worse without going farther,” answered he; and indeed I thought so too; for I saw a thunderstorm gathering upon some of the neighbouring hills, which looked very much as if thunderbolts did grow spontaneous about their naked summits; and upon pointing out this alarming demonstration of the Flavian Jupiter to my brother in arms, found, as I had anticipated, that the most transcendental philosophy does not reconcile a man to being drenched to the skin. Epigrams are not umbrellas, nor apophthegms waterproof—and he fully agreed with me that feudality, competition, and communism, might take care of themselves, but that our first duty was to take care of ourselves, and get home as fast as possible.

We started with the best intentions, but speedily found, and even Ravenswood was compelled to admit the humiliating fact, that whatever new faculties may be in the course of development in the human mind, that of running races with thunderstorms is not one of them. First came an oppressive and steamy warmth, and then an ominous chill.

"Here's iced lightning," said Ravenswood, quickening his pace. "There's a cave not very far off; if we can make it, we shall do, in such weather as this. These mountains are like potatoes and ancient families, the best part of them underground. Forward, forward!" We stepped out manfully. The first drops, about the size of acorns, acted as whip and spur, for

it was evident that there was more where they came from, and a smart race for the mouth of the cave ensued between us and the main body of the squall, which race we won, without many seconds to spare.

CHAPTER VI.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CONNEXION BETWEEN CAVERNS
AND JILTINGS—A CHANCE MEETING—BLUE JOHN
AT HOME—THE EXPRESSION OF THE ORDERS OF
ARCHITECTURE—THE FLIRT ON HER TRIAL—
FAITH IN ITS CRADLE—ALARMING DESERTION
—INCREDIBLE FIDELITY OF THE CONFESSOR.

I HAD acquired a holy horror of caves from the short period of premature interment I had undergone in the neighbourhood of Dunmanway, but, in the present instance, the choice between twenty minutes in a th understorm and twenty minutes in a

cavern was before me, and I judged the latter the lesser evil of the two.

Scarcely had we entered our chance place of shelter before the squall came hurtling and howling and rattling across the mouth of the cleft in the rock, where, for a time, we dwelt, like the coneys, as if it really meant mischief, which, however, did not concern us. We had the satisfactory feeling of being out of the scrape.

"You missed that, like your mammy's blessing," was my address to the Eolus that rode past upon that blast. Ravenswood addressed it more commandingly.

"Mount ye, diabolus, and fly!"

It is a most extraordinary fate, reflected I to myself, that I never get near a cave except when I am concerned in somebody's

unsuccessful love affairs. I bury myself, alive, when at Dunmanway, because Hawkins finds it in his heart to jilt Ellen O'Reilly; I bolt into this hole in a Derbyshire hill, because Nina Wharton takes it into her head to jilt Ravenswood; what fate is it that turns me into an underground Hymen, with a stalagmite altar, and a tallow candle torch? I wonder shall I ever take to earth on my own account?

The first crash of the storm had now swept by; sounds inside of the cavern became audible; a slight trampling and shuffling behind us attracted both my notice and Ravenswood's at the same moment, and turning round simultaneously, we beheld Edith Waldgrave, who had taken refuge there a few minutes before us.

She was riding with a lady and gentleman whom I had not seen before, whom she presented as Mr. and Miss Hargreaves. Ravenswood cast a hurried glance at the party, but having ascertained that the strange young lady was not Miss Wharton, regained his self-composure, which had been somewhat ruffled at the idea of Nina forming part of our troglodite assembly.

“Happy to see so much good company in one of our Derbyshire caverns,” said Edith, gaily. I hope you admire our country halls of reception, Mr. Ravenswood?”

“Nothing can be more charming,” replied that gentleman, “nor has any cavern ever been seen in so favourable a point of view since the time of the pious *Æneas*.”

"Is this, then, your first introduction to Blue John?" asked she, laughing heartily, and looking at Miss Hargreaves, who, however, was evidently in a state of blessed ignorance respecting the tragic episode of the deserted Dido.

"I have not hitherto much frequented the court of the cobold king," replied he. "Air is an element that I find essential to my existence, and I do not find that it flourishes when it gets very far into his dominions."

"You must admit, however," continued she, "there is beauty in the spar-roofed halls, with their fretwork of rock icicles, and furniture of stone sofas and tables. Even in this little cavern you may see, a little further on, what will give you a

very good idea of the ceiling of a Gothic cathedral."

"I can just make it out," answered Ravenswood, "and the gloom harmonizes with the character of the order. Gothic," continued he, "is truly the Christian's order; for it is the only order that embodies prayer in stone. The Saracenic, with its interlaced cordage and its horse shoe constantly recurring, *appeals* to the tent and the war steed; the classical pleasure temples of Greece and Rome *invite* their divinities to descend and disport themselves; whilst the ponderous Egyptian but *conceals*, in its mysterious recesses, what ought to be open to all mankind, and the fantastic Chinese but shadows forth the child mind of the nation that plays at praying, its deity a

coral and bells. Gothic alone points upwards."

I listened to this with some surprise; I thought it very likely that Ravenswood knew a good deal about architecture, but I was not prepared to find that he thought much about prayer. It recalled to my mind that passage of his "that sung, not for an age, but for all time"—

"Sweet are the uses of adversity,
That like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Bears yet a precious jewel in its head;"

and I began to wonder whether a slight touch of the scourge might not do *me* a great deal of good, not that I in the least desired the loving chastisement, but it just occurred that, sometimes what cannot be swallowed in gilded pills, must be taken

in a draught, however black and nauseous. We were all silent now for some time; indeed, I believe that Ravenswood's short analysis of architectural expression had given us a small, but well-chosen assortment of texts, upon one or other of which each of us constructed a little unspoken sermon for home consumption. Miss Hargreaves broke the silence.

"How tiresome this storm is," said she; "we shall be kept here all day."

"The country seems tired of it," answered I; "the oaks moan, and the hazels scream, and the cave groans, and the stream growls, and the corn murmurs."

"It does not seem better pleased itself," said Edith, "for it howls, and it chatters, and it weeps. I wonder will it soon pass."

"It will soon pass," replied Ravenswood.

"I see the bow in the cloud."

"What beau? Where?" asked Miss Hargreaves. "Who is it?"

"Not that sort of beau," replied Edith, laughing heartily; "surely the two we have are enough for moderate women like you and me."

This remark enlightened both Ravenswood and myself as to the meaning of Miss Hargreaves' question, which at first we did not understand, as well as threw a trifle of light upon the character of that young lady, and drew our attention to her accordingly. We both approached her horse's head simultaneously.

"I grieve for the dulness that reigns here," said I. "If Blue John only had his

floor in better order, I should petition you for a polka to the music of the elements."

"I wish to heaven we had a few more polkas here, to any music, or none at all," replied she, naively. "I never get a dance, and I am *so* fond of dancing."

"And flirting," added Edith, maliciously.

"Oh, no, indeed, I never flirt,—never think of such a thing," replied the other, hastily, as if the imputation had hit a sore spot. "I would not for the world be thought capable of flirting."

"Not with John Boothby?" asked Edith, significantly. (Confound John Boothby, thought I, what business has she to be jealous of him.) "Now, Mary, don't deny it."


"I do deny it," indignantly returned the

accused young lady, reddening and pouting, which I thought rather improved her, and prepared to extend my patronage to her accordingly (in so far as was consistent with my devotion elsewhere); "I do deny it. There is nothing I detest more than the character of a flirt."

"A flirt is the tiger that preys upon hearts, without the excuse of being hungry," said Ravenswood, gloomily, and indeed sternly; "the whited sepulchre, beautiful indeed outwards, but within full of dead men's bones. Milton describes a flirt as—

‘ Woman to the waist, and fair,
But ending foul, in many a snaky fold;’

and so, when the first revolution gave the flirts of Paris full swing, the furies of the guillotine flirted with death. I HATE A FLIRT."



"I do not," answered I, "I rather like them. I do not know how we should get on without them."


"I do not," said Edith, boldly, compressing her lips as if she were going to stand up for her sex through thick and thin, like a true-hearted woman—"I do not hate a flirt, because I think a great deal of injustice is very often done to women by simply christening them flirts, and then accusing them of having bad hearts, and of doing all sorts of unfeeling things. What is called a flirt is very often a good-natured, open-hearted girl, who likes seeing everybody happy about her, and does her best to make them so; and who cannot bear seeing any one uncomfortable or unhappy, and tries to please them; and the reward that she gets

from you men is, you say she is a flirt. That is not my idea of reciprocal kindness."

"Certainly," said I, "it does not follow that because girls flirt, they have therefore bad hearts. All one's experience of the world shows that many of the most determined flirts turn out excellent wives; and a good wife is not likely to have a very bad heart."

"No," said Edith, looking pleased, though surprised, at finding me on her side on this question; "the fact is, there are many girls who seem to have likings and penchants for dozens of men, who are only too glad to concentrate them all in one sweet mass of affection and love upon one, when *the one* appears."

"Then, according to your doctrine," said



Ravenswood, with a sneer, "flirtation is merely the overflowing of the heart, from the want of an adequate vessel to receive its outpourings, like milking a cow into a tea-cup."

"You say that sarcastically," retorted Edith, colouring a little at the implied ridicule; "but it is true, nevertheless; and you men call women flirts, as the wolf declared the lamb that was drinking out of the river lower down than him, muddied the water."

"What is flirtation?" asked I, innocently; "for of course we know nothing about that sort of thing in the army."


"The serpent speaking through the woman's mouth," answered Ravenswood, "as it was in the beginning."

"Saying nothings as if they were somethings," said Miss Hargreaves.

"Saying somethings that are to go for nothings," amended her more practical sire.

"Talking privately in public," suggested I.

"It is the first flicker of the flame that may sink and leave no trace, or may warm into light and love," said Edith, with that peculiar expression of a calm kindliness, or a kindly calmness on the countenance, that showed that she at least might talk of flirtation without feeling herself amenable to the accusation. "It is the gleam that may be the northern light, or may be the coming sun; and I am happy to see that the sun is come at last to relieve us from our prison cavern. Good bye, do not forget



Monday," continued she, as she rode out, stooping to bestow on me a friendly pressure of the hand, which flashed through me from head to foot. "Good bye, Mr. Ravenswood. I hope you will learn charity towards flirts, and Miss Hargreaves joins in the hope."

"Indeed, I don't," hastily interrupted that young lady, as the party, putting their horses into a canter, speedily vanished from our view.

Ravenswood and I walked home in comparative silence. I always thought, that though his peculiar epigrammatic turn of expressing himself seemed to come so natural to him, still it was followed by a certain exhaustion, as if an amount of headwork had gone into a few words, and a few seconds, that ought to have been spread over

a greater amount of thought and conversation and a larger space of time. I was absorbed in my own reflections. Edith rather puzzled me by her gallant defence of flirtation, yet I did not know whether to be pleased or displeased at it; and her parting with me had been kindness itself. I knew perfectly whether to be pleased or displeased at that.

A new feature, too, and one wholly unexpected, had appeared in Ravenswood's character. I could plainly perceive that in his trouble he had sought for consolation in the Scriptures. I did not think he had found it, for though the words were in his head, they had not as yet touched his heart. Still there they were, and not likely to remain there long without doing their appointed work.

Then I began to consider whether I had during our subterranean conversation said anything that might have given umbrage to Edith, or damaged me in her estimation; but as my memory did not charge me with any very heretical declaration, I finally found my mind at ease, and began to comfort myself with the reflection that I had, upon the whole, done a good day's work, and ought to be contented with it; which, accordingly, like a sensible man, I was.

So was Johnny, when he began gorging himself with the cannibal delicacy he had insisted upon in the morning; and I think even Ravenswood was the better for the opportunity of easing his mind by his diatribe respecting the inconstancy of the sex.


"'Pon my honour, Cobb," said Johnny,

"that tripe's delicious. We'll have it every day for dinner."

"Indeed, you shall have nothing of the sort, you young Anthropophagus," said I. "What would Lady Elizabeth say, if she heard you were devouring such an atrocity as that?"

"Oh, that's all you know about it," returned the young monster. "Lady Elizabeth says it's the most wholesome thing in the world; and whenever Edith is delicate, she gives her nothing else to eat."

I suppose no one will dispute the ardency of a passion that not only survived, but burned the brighter, after such a disclosure as this.



CHAPTER VII.

PUSS AT HER PLAY—HOW TO DRESS A YOUNG LADY
—THE BETTING ON THE MOUSE—CHARITY A LA
BERGAMOT—FEUDALITY AND WESTRIDINGISM—
ROYAL ROAD TO RICHES—MOUSE WINNING IN A
CANTER—DAWNING OF HOPE—PUSS IN PER-
PLEXITY.

MONDAY came, and with it its expected banquet, and my first meeting with the Whartons. Nina received me with the greatest cordiality, that is to say, with a volley of abuse, which I took as the highest compliment she could pay me, as in truth it was. It was "pretty Fanny's way."

Mr. Wharton in his way was not less cordial.

"I hope," said he, "that now we shall see more of one another, now that you have no wild Irishmen to shoot, and no idea of being hanged yourself."

"Certainly," returned I; "the occasion is more favourable, especially—"

"As you yourself are less occupied," interrupted Nina, significantly; "that makes all the difference in the world."


I did not perceive exactly what the young lady meant by this innuendo; and dinner being announced, we took our places at the table, to all appearance very socially, but really in order of battle; for Johnny was, at least at starting, ludicrously on his guard, Nina feeling her way, and watching

him like a cat Edith; jealously scanning every move of that enterprising young lady, and I maintaining a superintendence of the whole party, equally vigilant and impartial. I cannot say that I much like such gladiatorial repasts. I agree with a great authority, that "better is a dinner of herbs where peace is, than a stalled ox and contention therewith." Nevertheless, even a rat driven into a corner makes a dangerous fight. I recollect once, in Germany, being vanquished by a field mouse, in an attempt to capture him, and my friend, who was walking with me at the time, narrating the circumstances so ably, that in the course of the evening I was congratulated upon my escape from the young bear that had attacked me in the woods.

However, if one must fight one must; if one must watch one must. I had rather eat, drink, and be merry; but, on this occasion, it was worth my while to keep a bright look out, and I did so. Nina's attack was made with very sufficient skill. She had felt Johnny's mouth, and, finding that he would not stand the curb, which it would have suited her best to apply, changed her hand, and acted upon the principles of the humane costermonger, who sings—

“If I had a donkey wot wouldn't go,
D'ye think I'd wollop him, no! no!! no!!!
I'd give him carrots, and give him beans,
And try all sorts of gentle means.”

Nina's carrots and beans were consulting Johnny, and then paying great deference to his opinion, looking well into his eyes, making him promise to write some of “that



darling poetry of his in her album" (which she always carried about with her as a sort of rising-poet-trap); which bait poor Johnny swallowed with as much eagerness, and as much sense as a shark does a bit of red cloth, believing that it was the dawning of his poet glory.

She was attired with great skill and effect, appearing in a dress of *rose de chine glacée*, over a slip *à la watersuchet, soufflée à la fleur d'orange*, and trimmed with *rosettes aux navets*; her sleeves *en gigot piquée à l'oseille*, and looped *à la jardinière*; and her head dressed *à la Chambord*, with a wreath of perriwinkles, and a *Seigné à la Maintenon*; at least, that was the description Edith gave me of her dress, and she never deceived me. Armed she was, indeed, for conquest, from head to heel; for

her shoes, which were made of something that I did not know the name of, and of a colour that I could not describe, excepting that it was a queer sort of grey, with little green spots, were, as I was informed by the same authority, *pieds d'agneau à la poulette*. I ventured to make a complimentary allusion to her fairy feet to Nina—a delicate audacity which she soon forgave, but never forgot.

She was very careful of her father, treated Lady Elizabeth with a mixture of deference to herself and gratitude for her hospitality, which was delightful to behold, and I should imagine still more so to receive, and scattered enough of the light of her countenance over the eyes of Mr. and Miss Hargreaves to blind them effectually.

In short, she played what would have been a very pretty, and probably successful game, but that every move was watched all the time by two pair of very sharp, and not very friendly eyes. Yet, as far as skill was concerned in that game, she got the better of us both; and a time was not very far distant when I cursed the day that ever brought me into collision with Nina Wharton.

"I suppose you are to receive some great reward," said she to Johnny, "for your battle with those horrid Irish? Shall you be made a major, or a knight, or what?"

"We have been forgiven for it," replied Johnny, "and that, I imagine, is as much as we shall ever get. I got a couple of months' leave, though, and that's something."

"You never came to see us," said she, reproachfully.

"No; I got it to go home," was the matter-of-fact reply.

"Ah! I do not wonder at your being eager to get home," said the young lady, "you have such a charming home, so much to attract you, and so many pursuits. I should never, never make up my mind to leave such a home."

"Certainly," said Lady Elizabeth, with a stately humility, "we have little to complain of here; ours is as happy a home as well may be, and our position is every thing that can be desired; for we feel its responsibilities, and yet can see under our own eyes that its duties are discharged as carefully as well may be."

“And as advantageously as well may be to those dependent upon your ladyship,” rejoined Mr. Hargreaves. “It is pleasing to see rich and poor united by the common tie of a common sympathy.”

“Oh, yes! it must be delightful,” said Nina, “to go about doing good to the poor, and teaching their children to read and write, and how to dress themselves, and good manners, and to see all the people pulling off their hats and curtsying as you pass; and then to have schools and give prizes, it must be a delightful sensation.”

“There is wide difference between the sense of the discharge of duty, and the theatrical sensation of love of applause,” said Mr. Hargreaves, gravely (‘Old Huncks!’ ejaculated Nina, aside. I must say it rather

struck me as breaking a butterfly upon the wheel); "as wide as the difference between our intellect which is spiritual, and our passions which are material."

"I suppose there is no harm in liking having Sunday-schools?" said Nina, pettishly.

"There is no harm in liking having Sunday-schools," replied Mr. Hargreaves; "there is good comes out of evil; without the love of applause, many things which are done would be left undone; but man loves consequence, and, as Pope truly says—

'What his hard heart denies,
His charitable vanity supplies.'"

"I don't see the vanity about charity children," said Nina. "I never saw a pretty charity child in my lifetime. Charity

may be a beautiful virtue, but she has an uncommonly ugly family."

"That does not quite put those poor orphans out of the pale of human kindness," said Mr. Hargreaves.

"No; but it makes it a much greater sacrifice being kind to them," said Nina. "I'm sure it almost makes one sick to look at their dirty little faces. Uch!"

Mr. Hargreaves looked very grave and solemn, and shocked and horrified, and I dare say thought Nina a young vulture or two-legged hyæna. He turned to Lady Elizabeth, and made some sententious remarks about the duties of landed proprietors towards the poor on their estates, which called up Mr. Wharton, who lamented the rapidity with which the land was changing hands.

"I do not think that it changes hands half fast enough," said Mr. Hargreaves. "The absurd difficulties about settlements, and tithes, and incumbrances, the leaven of the old feudality, ought to be swept away. The incubus that weighs down the productive power, is to be found in the prejudices and the poverty of its present nominal owners, and should be tolerated no longer in a great civilized, commercial, and advancing nation like this."


There spoke Manchester, thought I, in language cribbed, without acknowledgment, from New York.

"I do not think it desirable that the change, which I admit must come, should take place too quickly," said Mr. Wharton, "and for this reason—that for centuries

property in land has been held and acknowledged by its owners to imply certain responsibilities towards inferiors; whereas commercial and funded property has always been held irresponsible; and I firmly believe that the rapid growth, of late years, of the enormous mass of *irresponsible* riches that now exists, has done much towards vitiating the heart of the nation."

"Perhaps so," interrupted Mr. Hargreaves; "but a better feeling on that subject is appearing: look at the care the mill-owners take of their hands; look at the iron masters keeping their furnaces in blast at a loss; look at the railways building churches and schools. The moneyed class is beginning to learn that riches have their duties as well as their rights."

“Very true,” replied Mr. Wharton; “the moneyed class is beginning to learn that great and good lesson, but only beginning, and I should like it to complete it before it gets possession of the land. I do not say that those whose incumbrances prevent them doing their duty towards their property should be allowed to retain it to the injury of their tenantry; but I wish to see the whole body connected with agriculture a united body, bound together by ties less tangible, but not less stringent, than Smithfield bargains; not to see them as haggler and huxter, but as landlord and tenant. And sure am I of this, that free-trade principles once introduced into the system of the occupation of land will speedily have no tenantry at all.”



"Well, I do not see the necessity of a tenantry; after all, tenant farmers are little else but middlemen," said Mr. Hargreaves. "If I buy an estate of a couple of thousand acres, with ten or fifteen substantial tenants on it, it is clear that I, the owner, have to support ten or fifteen substantial families in ease, and comfort, and perpetual bungling into the bargain, merely to superintend the cultivation of the land,—that is to say, to do what a sharp Scotch steward would do for a couple of hundred a-year; it would be only a couple of miles each way."

"That is precisely what I dread," answered Mr. Wharton; "instead of a rural gentry full of local attachments, and influential over an independent yeomanry,

which latter class can hardly now be found other than in the ranks of the tenant farmers, you would substitute capitalist proprietors and agricultural serfs, working under a bureaucratic system of cultivation, hopeless of bettering themselves, for the want of steps in the ladder of life, and ever ready for insurrection. The land of tillers, farmers, and lords, alike bound together by common interest, mutual dependance, and the traditions thereto belonging, is a rock on which the edifice of the state stands secure, whatever storms assail it; dissolve those ties, make it matter of pure merchandise, and it crumbles into sand; the cohesion is gone.


A terrific yawn from Nina—an act of disrespect towards her father's eloquence,

which seemed to horrify Lady Elizabeth—greeted the termination of Mr. Wharton's remarks, which I thought not only very sensible, but very interesting, and wished most sincerely that he (and, indeed, any one else, should this meet the eye of any seeker of truth) would give me a couple of thousand acres to try his system on, and another couple to try Mr. Hargreaves'. I would promise the utmost fairness in the experiment, and the most impartial fidelity in the report, which I should have no objection to making half-yearly, or at any other period that might be agreeable.

"Now don't be long," said Nina to Johnny, as the ladies left the room; "don't stay drinking that abominable wine all the evening. I want to have a walk and a

talk with you;" an overture to which Johnny, half pleased, half suspicious, answered with a grim benignity that quite upset the small stock of gravity I carried about with me. Nina gave me a look when I laughed, not exactly daggers, but steel traps and spring-guns; I cannot say that I liked it much.

A long conversation about political economy, free-trade, and protection, and the projects of Peel, ensued between the two elder gentlemen, of which all that I can remember is, that Mr. Wharton stoutly maintained that it was impossible to add to the national wealth, according to the system of that eminent and many-sided statesman, by impoverishing every individual in the nation; whereas, the champion



of free-trade doggedly asserted that it was the only road to riches. I had a hazy idea on my mind, that a rate of duty on imports might be discovered or revealed that would combine a rational protection, somewhat equivalent to the burdens imposed by the debt, with a considerable revenue, which would enable our rulers to dispense with taxes that internally clog the industry and production of the country; but, as I always get puzzled with quoting figures, after the thirtieth or fortieth hundred thousand, or million, or whatever figure it may be that one plays at statistical tennis with, I held my tongue, and eat peaches. Johnny exhibited the most undeniable marks of fidgetiness, and I have no doubt thought that we had been several hours at table,

when, in about twenty minutes, the claret having passed untouched, and the post-scriptal glass of sherry having signalized the cessation of thirst, we adjourned,—or rather paired off, for the party of eight was forthwith quartered into four twos.

Nina carried off Johnny as a cat carries off a mouse, and with a view of extracting enjoyment for herself from him by a somewhat similar process. Lady Elizabeth was enlightening Miss Hargreaves with stories of the court of George the Fourth and Sarah the queen, to which that young lady, whose glimpses at high life were necessarily through a telescope of considerable power, listened with a reverential ecstasy or an ecstatic reverence, I am not quite sure which. Messrs. Wharton and


Hargreaves were deep in the metallic mystery of currency—so deep, indeed, that I doubt whether either of them saw his way out, though they certainly had not got to the bottom of it, and it was the first opportunity I had of thanking Edith for some flowers she had sent me the day before by Johnny. I think it took me about an hour and a half to express my gratitude properly, but I hope, and indeed believe, that she was satisfied with it.

Johnny never could be persuaded to disclose, either to Edith or me, what Nina and he talked about, or what she said to him, but whatever it was, I could easily perceive that she was making nothing of him; for as, strolling about the pleasure-grounds, we occasionally encountered one another, I

could see by the heightened colour, and by the increasing viciousness with which she tore flower after flower into bits, that affairs were not progressing to her mind.

It so happened, that on one of those occasions she caught Edith and me exchanging a glance of intelligence, which discovery I have no doubt let her into the whole secret of her indifferent success with Johnny, for she set her lips, glanced for a moment at me with a most unfeminine expression, and dashed the flower she was pulling to pieces angrily to the ground.

I shall not, for reasons of my own, detail the conversation that passed between Edith and me that evening. I do not say that it was of a very important, still less conclusive character. I do not think that I once



used the word love, nor am I aware that she ever once blushed during the half-hour that we rambled about the pleasure-grounds previous to being summoned to tea, or the hour we employed at that meal; but this I will say, that I never before felt so hopeful or so happy as I did that evening. It seemed as if the dawning of a brighter, purer career, was stealing through the dimness of my then life. Life itself assumed a promise and a value that I had not previously attributed to it. I should have had an invincible repugnance to being hanged that evening, yet when we did assemble round the tea-table we were such bad company that Lady Elizabeth positively reproached us with our dullness, and not without justice.

Nina was as cross as a cat, and kept snapping at her father, who treated it with his customary coolness, which did not, however, prevent Lady Elizabeth being much scandalized. Johnny was put out; the two elder gentlemen had talked themselves dry (which was fortunate); Miss Hargreaves had, I believe, just made the discovery that some of the gentlemen ought to have paid her some attention; Edith was grave and thoughtful, and I do not think that I was perfectly *compos mentis*, though I had, at all events, no disposition to talk. All that was said added to our perplexities.

"Edith," said Johnny, suddenly, across the table, "do you know what Ravenswood says about——"

"Who?" interrupted Nina, colouring.

"Ravenswood, of our Regiment; you know him, don't you?" answered Johnny, in perfect simplicity, for he was utterly ignorant of the affair between Ravenswood and Nina, as indeed was everybody else in the room excepting the young lady and myself.

"No—that is, yes, I believe I do," replied she, getting confused. "Where is he? He is not here, is he?"

"Yes, he is at Carlton," replied Johnny; "some one must stay and look after the barracks; but I dare say we shall get him to dine here in a day or two."

Nina seemed on the point of breaking out into a deprecation of this addition to the family party, but thought better of it.

She bit her lips, changed colour more than once, and then, appearing to have recovered her composure in a marvellously short space of time, challenged me to a game of chess.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHECK-MATE—FORWARD!—FORWARD!—JOHNNY UN-
PUMPABLE—TONGUE V. HAND—A PALE DREAM.

CHESS was not the only game that Nina played at when we sat ourselves down to the little chequered table that was supposed to be about to occupy our exclusive attention that evening, but at the other game she played to a disadvantage, for she did not know that I had already seen the cards. She was prompt in action, I must say that for her ; she opened her fire directly.

“ So Mr. Ravenswood is at Carlton,” said

she, with a glance at me half fearful, half shy; "what an oddity he is; is he a great friend of yours? does he still wear his hair so long? has he got right in his liver? you know he had a dreadful liver complaint; does he still talk like a French novel? is he great friends here?"

Presuming, from the rapidity with which she hurried question upon question, that she cared very little about the answers, I merely answered the last.

"He comes here occasionally," said I, "but I do not know that he is particularly intimate."

"Oh, not very," said she, as if that was rather a relief to her mind; "what an odd person he is."

"Yes," said I.


"He's not a bosom friend of yours," continued she, "is he?"

"He and I are very good friends," replied I; "I like him very well, and I believe he likes me; but as to bosom friends, both he and I go our own way, and such men do not make bosom friends."

"No, you horrible, unsympathizing, unconfiding creatures," answered the young lady, apparently rather more at her ease; "you men never do. How very odd he is."

"Very," answered I; and Nina began to bite her lips. She evidently wanted me to ask how he was odd, so that she might have been enabled to tell me her own story about her affair with him; for I take it for granted, that she was quite sharp enough

to see that something about it was sure to transpire soon, and also to see the advantage of having her story in possession of the ground. I, on the other hand, was curious to see what her next move would be if I gave her no assistance in introducing the subject. She dropped it for a moment, began to talk about chess, got quite naturally from the mimic war at chess to real battles, from battles, with a charming simplicity, to soldiers, from soldiers, with a sweet artlessness, to barracks, from barracks in general, with a ready facility, to those of Carlton in particular, thence, with an angelic subtleness, to those who dwelt in that warlike residence, and back again to Ravenswood. "What an oddity he is."



"Quite an original," was my answer.

"Do you know," said she, despairing, I suppose, of making anything of such an obdurate monster as me, "he thought proper during the summer to fancy himself in love with me."

"No, really," answered I; "what put that into his head?"

"Well, I do not know," returned the young lady with a toss of the head, as much as to say—no such wonder that he should; "I'm sure I gave him no encouragement; quite the contrary; if I had, I should have had a scene, no doubt, and I cannot bear scenes; besides which, I did not think it right to encourage him; there is nothing that I detest like a flirtation; I would not be called a flirt for the world."


"I should think there could be no danger of that," I answered, with a wonderful gravity.

"No," answered she; "I could not bear to be thought one. . But he was so absurd. I should not wonder, even now, if he set some story about me going, now that he and I are so near one another. However, you will not believe him if he does, will you?"

"Check-mate!" was my answer.

"You tiresome creature, it isn't check-mate."

"Satisfy yourself," replied I; and after a minute or two she was compelled to confess herself defeated. She flattered herself, however, that she had been victorious at a game of more importance; and indeed, had



I not been already in possession of Ravenswood's version, which I believed then, and do still, she would certainly have succeeded in making me believe hers. As it was, the only effect produced on my mind by the conversation we had over the chessmen was the establishment of a general and chronic disbelief of everything she said; I had suspected her before, and I now felt my suspicions fully confirmed.

Scarcely had we risen from the chess-table than she returned to her attack upon Johnny, who received all her blandishments like a Newfoundland dog just come out of the water; and I caught her eye fixed upon me, as if she connected me in some manner with his unimpressibility. Edith had thought it right to devote herself to the amusement

of the Hargreaves, and I was not sorry when the hour of our departure arrived. Whilst they were packing up Johnny's chest, so as to make it weather tight against the night air, I had another short but sweet conversation with Edith; and we parted, as I supposed, the best friends in the world.

"Well, Johnny," said I, when we made a start at last, "what was that young lady saying to you all the time?"

"Oh! I dare say," replied that mysterious youth, ungratefully turning my own weapons against myself, "you expect me to tell you, do you, and you always telling me that I ought never to repeat conversations?"

"Very true," said I; "but you should always confide implicitly in your captain;

that's the canon law, cannon law, my boy! fortieth military article."

"Don't you wish you may get it?" answered the young cockatrice; and as I was compelled to admit to myself that he was right, I abstained from pressing him any more on the subject. And, indeed, I had thoughts of my own to occupy me. With respect to Johnny my mind was at ease. I saw that he was thoroughly awake to Nina's character, and that now he might be trusted to take care of himself. On the subject of the influence that that young lady might have upon my own future prospects I was not quite so easy. That glance which I had encountered seemed to me to embody much of "the evil eye," more than I liked. However, I thought "faint

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heart," &c. &c.; and then there came a dream of a brighter glow and a rosier hue than those that used to haunt my waking hours, and which abundantly occupied me until I reached Carlton.

Here I found my goblin page, as usual, on the look out for me, with what I suppose he he would have termed a clane pleete of letters.

"There's one from the captain, sir," said he, "and here's one from Ballymaccroccodile. I know that place well; it's in the coun Tiprare."

"Upon my word, Doddy," replied I, "if I had ever had any doubt as to the county that had the honour of rearing such a brilliant specimen of humanity as yourself, I should have it solved now, for none but

Milesian organs could have articulated the word Tipperary in one syllable."

"That's thrue, sir," answered my Leporello.

The first letter I opened was one marked "On Her Majesty's service," claiming thereby that precedence due to public matters. I found it was an order for Ravenswood and myself to proceed to Derby, to sit upon a court-martial which was to be held there the day but one after this, Monday. The second was from Hawkins.

"DEAR COBB,

"Dunmanway.

"Many thanks for your pithy note; it is like what a great authority says a general action ought to be,—short, sharp, and decisive; and, indeed, comprises one of

those instructions that fulfil themselves, for I have ceased to doubt. I have, however, one question more to submit to your judgment, it is the last of the series—Do you recommend that I should make the communication, which I am about to make to Ellen, in person or in writing? I incline to the latter, but should be glad to have the benefit of your opinion.

“Yours sincerely,

“JAMES HAWKINS.”

The next letter was from Mrs. O'Reilly—

“DEAR CAPTAIN COBB,

“Though I have but little to say, I know from the kind interest you have always taken in our family that you will be glad to hear from us. Your little pet, Alice, is

flourishing, but often asks for you, and when you will come back. She desires her very, very best love to you, and hopes you are well, and will take care of your health which, she says, you neglect, and that that is very naughty. Ellen, I regret to say, is far from well. Her spirits have completely failed her, and I am really getting somewhat alarmed about her. I have been strongly recommended to take her to Buxton, where, I am told, that, in addition to the sanative quality of the waters, there is a fine bracing air, likely to prove very restorative. I think *change of scene* very desirable for her. Perhaps, as you are in the neighbourhood, you can give us some information on the subject. We have made no friends in the new regiment, who do not by

any means make themselves as popular here as your brother officers. We were so pleased to hear from our young friend, Johnny. It is gratifying to find that the maxim, 'out of sight out of mind,' does not always apply. Nanny was quite melancholy when he went away, but consoles herself with the idea that he will soon come back. If you can spare time, pray let me hear from you, and believe me,

“ My dear Captain Cobb,

“ Ever yours most sincerely,

“ FLORENCE O'REILLY.

“ P.S.—Mr. O'Reilly, who is just come in from a round of his parish, desires me to remember him kindly to you, and to beg your opinion as to what were the dimensions of the ark, as compared with shipping of the present day. F. O'R.”

"I think my friend Ellen will speedily reconcile herself to the air of Ballymac-crocodile," was my soliloquy, as I folded up the letter. "Doddy," said I, "I shall be going into head-quarters for a day or two to-morrow, and I shall take you with me; so mind you have everything ready and smart, and now be off to bed with you."

"I'll have everything as nate as a new pin. Good night, yer honner!" replied my faithful henchman, as he vanished from my sight. I had been for some time aware, from the perfume of a cigar that floated upon the ambient air, that somebody was smoking in the neighbourhood, who I knew could not well be anybody but Ravenswood, and accordingly that gentleman soon afterwards approached me.

"Well, how did your dinner go off?"

asked he. "How was Miss Wharton looking?"

"Much as usual," I replied. "She knows that you are here."

"How does she know that?" asked he, hastily.

"Johnny mentioned your name."

"And what did she say?"

"Nothing at the moment, I replied; "but afterwards, under pretence of playing chess, she told me a long story, evidently the one she wishes to be believed herself, saying that you had fancied yourself in love with her, but that she had never given you the slightest encouragement."

"God forgive her for saying so," said he, clasping his hands in great agitation.

"I suppose," said I, "you will not go to Beauchamp while she is there?"

“Good heaven—no!” answered the poor fellow; “I’d rather go to the lowest pit of hell than go there whilst she is there; sooner than see her and hear the sound of her voice I’d rather dig my own grave, and have the earth shovelled in over me alive.”

A cold shudder seemed to run over him; his knees were for a moment unsteady, and I was exceedingly alarmed, for I was afraid that he was about to experience a renewal of his attack. However, by a strong effort, he recovered himself.

“Don’t think me weak,” said he, with a melancholy smile; “strength comes and goes, and none can control it. Strange it is that feelings, the best that our nature is capable of, should imply sufferings the

deepest that our nature can support. Love may point to heaven with its positive pole, but its negative points to a widely different region."

I do not know why it was that this observation grated very harshly on my ear, and I felt once more that dim presentiment of coming evil, that sent a chill into my heart, yet I knew not why.

"By-the-bye," said I, "you are for a court-martial at Derby on Wednesday; I shall drive over in my car, in the course of to-morrow, and I can take you."

"Thank you," said he; "I am not sorry to get away, even for a day or two. Do you know what the court is about, or why we are sent for? Have not they got people enough there?"

"It is a general court-martial," I answered; "and I suppose they have not enough for that and the duties of the place besides."

"I am very glad it has happened," repeated he. He then walked backwards and forwards two or three times.

"I have not a chance of sleeping," remarked he, and lit another cigar. "Cobb," asked he at last, "do you believe in dreams?"

"No," replied I, "of course I do not."

"Do you believe that a vision may appear to one in sleep?"

"I don't know what may happen, or may not," I answered; "but I do not believe that anything of the sort has happened to you during the last week, if that is what you are driving at."

"But it has occurred already, and may happen again," urged he; "you will not deny that."

"The deluge did happen, and may occur again," replied I, Mr. O'Reilly's question about the tonnage of the ark running in my head; "but I do not believe that it is going to do so. There were prophets, but they are rubbed out now. If you are inclined to put faith in a dream, tell me what is a dream?"

"A dream is the shadow of the mind floating over the brain,—the dim light that shines on us during the eclipse of the soul,—the only picture the human spirit embodies untinged with self-interest."

"A dream, my dear fellow," retorted I, "is nothing more than imagination in a

night shirt, and is no more to be trusted than any other illusion. You may trust the rule of three, but not the rule of contraries."

Ravenswood was evidently unsatisfied; he walked backwards and forwards moodily, and then returned to the old subject, which, poor fellow, evidently lay very near his heart, and seemed but an indifferent neighbour.

"Did Miss Wharton speak of me," asked he, "in any friendly manner, or seem to show any interest in me?"

"I cannot honestly say that she did," I replied; "all her attention seemed to be directed to exculpating herself."

"Did she know that I was here," he asked, "before she came?"

ing away in me at the same time. I recollect nothing more till I found myself at home."

I now recollected Ravenswood's first question when his consciousness returned—"Is she gone?" and this story of his accounted for the pertinacity with which he had stuck to the subject of dreams. I always knew that he had a slight dash of superstition in his character, and he evidently attached much weight to this, which seemed to me to be either an ordinary dream, or at the most an illusion not unnatural in the case of a man seized with a fit. Indeed, I knew that in cases of epilepsy something of the sort does immediately precede the fit. The patient fancies he is going to be run over, or fall from a precipice; and an appa-

rition from the grave was not an unnatural form to take for the nameless terror that heralds those visitations. On the other hand, the theory of its being really a vision was not quite repugnant to my mind; for, as I believe we all are when highly excited and morbidly anxious, I was at that moment somewhat inclined to be superstitious myself.

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CHAPTER IX.

SOUND THE ADVANCE——THE VOICE OF CAUTION——
 DODDY A LA SUPREME——FIZZES OF THE HEART
 ——THE CONFESSOR AS DANTE——RAVENSWOOD AS
 ZIMMERMAN——DEODATUS AS PETRARCH——THE
 LAW'S DELAY.

PREVIOUS to starting for Derby the next morning I had to answer the letters I had received; my answer to Hawkins was short, though not so laconic as my former one. It ran thus, and I recommend it to the careful study of ingenuous youth, male and modest.

"DEAR HAWKINS,

"In your dealings with the fair and gentle sex, never, if the very hair was dropping off your head for terror, let a woman let you see that you are afraid of her. It invariably throws them into a state of homicidal mania, and is ruinous, likewise spooney, which is worse. If you write, it will be very likely attributed to something of the sort; besides, '*litera scripta manet*;' therefore, beware of the pen. Go in person, and prosper; or, as our sporting friend would say, go in and win.

"Yours sincerely,

"SOMERSET CAVENDISH COBB.

"P.S.—

'If when 'twere done, 'twere well, then 'twere well done,

That 'twere done quickly.'"—SHAKESPEARE!

The other to Mrs. O'Reilly I shall also give, for the benefit of those desirous of cultivating the art of polite letter writing.

“ MY DEAR MRS. O'REILLY,

“ I am truly sorry to hear that Miss O'Reilly's health is not what her friends could desire. Buxton is justly celebrated for the sanative power of its water and the purity of its air, but I think it would be not advisable to go there *immediately; in another fortnight* the crowd will be much diminished, and the weather more settled. I shall have great pleasure in making what inquiries you may require made, and shall write again in a few days. Give my love to Alice, and tell her I shall come and see her

whenever I can, and bring Johnny with me if possible. That young gentleman is in high health and spirits, but by no means inclined to forget his friends at the rectory, I assure you. With respect to Mr. O'Reilly's question about the ark, if my calculation is correct, she must have measured, presuming her to have been merely what the name imports, a huge floating chest, about 43,000 tons, which would have given her the capacity of about 20 sail of the line. If she was ship-built, she would measure from 25,000 to 30,000 tons, which I see no reason to suppose she was; but in either case would be of enormous size, and able to carry an incredible quantity of animals and stores. I hope to hear from

you soon again, and trust you will write in better spirits.

“ Believe me, my dear Mrs. O'Reilly,

“ Ever yours faithfully,

“ SOMERSET CAVENDISH COBB.”

Having dispatched these missives, and given Johnny a great deal of good advice as to how he should comport himself during our absence in his arduous office of commanding the troops for the first time—advice which he seemed to consider superfluous, Ravenswood and I, attended by Doddy, started for Derby.

That small youth was uncommonly smart. I think the maids at Beauchamp made a sort of live doll and animated lay figure of him. He had a remarkably brilliant silk hand-

kerchief which *I* never gave him; a bouquet which I should rather have liked myself; a pair of those worsted manacles, wherewith young ladies occasionally handcuff favoured young gentlemen, round his wrist; and a coral shirt pin representing a heart and arrow. Ravenswood was highly amused at his dandified appearance.

“Doddy,” said he, “you’ll play the dence with the girls in Derby; we’ll have them all running after you to Carlton.”

“Faith, I wouldn’t demean myself with the townsfolk, sir,” replied Doddy; “it’s the county families I’ve live with; you wouldn’t have me consort wid them flaghoppers in Derby?”

“Don’t be rash, Doddy,” said I; “who knows who you mayn’t lose your heart to?”

"Sorrow fear of that, sir," said the ingenuous youth, with a sketch of a blush; "I don't go chucking my heart in every woman's face I meet."

"It ought to be very light, very empty, and very elastic, to do so," said Ravenswood to me, with a melancholy smile; "yet there are those that can."

"I don't know that," I answered; "it isn't an entire heart, not a true flame; it is like a box of lucifer matches—you may have fifty little blazes, each of small effect, less value, and no endurance."

"You may well call that sort of thing Lucifer," answered my companion, "for it is the invention of the devil."

"Well, I do not know," answered I; "but I have seen the hand of the 'chief of the

'ligne-cadette' of the angelic hierarchy in some of those affairs."

"How do you know his hand?" asked Ravenswood.

"By the mark it leaves," I replied.

"The touch burns."

"What a barren, dreary moor we are entering on," remarked Ravenswood. "Has waste land any effect upon you, Cobb?"

"I do not call this waste land," answered I; "it is too full of fences and roads to give one the feeling of solitude, but I have felt a strange sensation in some parts of Connemara, when I have stood upon a hill, and looked round, and seen no single man, or living animal, or house, or road, or fence. I have then felt that sort of exhilaration that I am told people feel in deserts."

"The effect upon me is always depressing," said Ravenswood. "In solitude the mind, without sympathy to support or object to excite, runs cold. The elements of inflation fail us, and the bubble collapses."

"I differ with you there," said I; "in my mind, in complete solitude, the chains that bind us to earth drop, and the spirit ascends."

"Is that your idea?" said he, smiling. "I should have supposed that yours was more like Byron's—

"By solitude I mean a sultan's, not
A hermit's, with a harem for a grot."

"Byron's, if you like," I replied, "but not that passage."

"Oh, that the desert were my dwelling place,
With one fair spirit for my minister,
So I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her."

"Och! that the dacerd wor me dwelling place," I heard, in a suppressed voice, behind me, as if reciting the lines with a view of fixing them on the memory for future use, "with won pair sperrits for me minister (that's Scotch for a priest), so I might not forget the hurdle race, and batin' no one."

Here my friend Doddy's study of the sentimental was cut short by a roar of laughter from Ravenswood.

"By the virtue of your oath, Doddy," said he, "did you ever write poetry yourself?"

"Ah! now, sir," replied the youth, shyly, "is it the likes of me writin' pothry; it's pokin' fun at me you are."

"I see it in your eye," said Ravenswood, with an awful solemnity, which only elicited a wink from Doddy, who then rubbed his eyes, as if to rub out the evidence against him. "Speak the truth and shame the devil—did you ever write poetry?"

"'Faith, I never did, sir," replied Leporello, with a sudden readiness which suggested to me that possibly Doddy's accomplishments might not extend very far in the direction of pen and ink.

"Did you ever compose?" asked I.

"What's composin,' sir?" inquired that op-booted innocence.

"Did you ever make verses?" repeated I.

"Sure it isn't a manufacture, sir," returned the votary of the Muses, who was feeling himself hard pressed.

"Come, recite some of your own verses immediately, if not sooner, or I'll wring your neck," said I; and clearing his throat, and muttering something about "needs must when the devil dh rives," which I suppose was intended as a personal compliment to me, the youth recited the following verses, which I have no doubt had already been duly applauded, and I hope appreciated, in the housekeeper's room at Beauchamp Hall:—

I.

"Would I had a power of song,
Blazin' with Apollo's fire,
Nought I'd do the whole day long,
But sing the eyes of Miss Maria.

II.

"Would I were as grand and tall
As Jupiter, or rather higher,
I'd look at no one else at all,
But pay me coort to Miss Maria.


III.

"Were I a gentleman as rich
In guineas as the Bank of Ire-
land, I'd just behave as sich,
And lay them out for Miss Maria.

IV.

"Would I were as big and sthrong,
As that mighty man, Goliah,
Nought I'd do the whole day long
But thrash the foes of Miss Maria."

"Very good, Doddy," I answered; "if
that does not melt Miss Maria's heart, she
must be a she-wolf with a liver complaint.
Is that all of it?"



"Yes, yer honour."

"Well, we'll let you off the rest in that case."

"Doddy, I have a better opinion of you for these verses," said Ravenswood; "I daresay you will thrash Miss Maria's enemies."

"By dad! I would, sir, or her friends either, if she wished it," was the liberal answer.

"I suspect Doddy's muse is an *ignis fatuus*, and deludes unwary travellers," remarked I. "I do not know the country well, and am by no means sure that we have not lost our way."

"That fellow breaking stones over there will tell us," said Ravenswood. "Hollo! my man, where does this road go to?"

"I doan't know where it goes in the night," replied the man; "I always find it here when I come to work in the morning."

"Mighty nate," muttered Doddy. "I didn't think there was a Saxon had 'cute-ness enough for that."

"Will it take us to Derby?"

"Yes, if you want to go through Crackenthorpe."

As I knew that Crackenthorpe was four miles out of the way, I did not want to go through that celebrated place; and, after a short single combat of cross questions and crooked answers, got my head straight, and we arrived at Derby without adventure or misadventure.

"Cobb, my boy," said Jenkins, when he

greeted me on my arrival, "when is a regiment divided by being brought together?"

"Upon my word, Jenkins," I answered, "I do not know, and I do not care."

"You've no fun—you," said he, disappointed.

"The mountain labours," said Ravenswood, "let the mouse come forth."

"When it's quartered in the same place," replied the wag, and applauded himself very cordially. I believe he had a number of other riddles on half cock, but went to report myself to the colonel, and so escaped them.

Colonel Howard informed me that I was in for a much longer job than I had anticipated. We had three cases to try, each of which was likely to be a difficult one; and

one in particular, which might be prolonged almost indefinitely, by the illness of one of the witnesses. Now, when the reader reflects that, in the first place, a court-martial which assembles at ten o'clock in the morning has no legal existence after four in the afternoon, such being the law; and, secondly, that a court-martial is infinitely more difficult to satisfy, as to evidence, than any other court, the above-mentioned reader, my friend and father confessor, will perceive that a very slight hitch may prolong the proceedings of the court for a very considerable time.

This was very provoking, for I was exceedingly anxious to get back to Carlton. I had a project in my head, for my arrival there, which was very near my heart. I

did not look upon the regimental enjoyments with such a favourable eye as before. I thought the mess dull that evening, and the fine old full-bodied military port exceedingly like poison. I thought Jenkins a remarkable bore, and O'Flaherty an unmitigated savage. I suspected Simpkins of lying like a trooper, in a little anecdote he told me (in the strictest confidence) of Miss Hopkinson, of Puddle-street, in that ancient city, having told him she could not sleep the night before for his unkindness; and I suspected Doddy of being a scamp, which indeed was natural enough, for I had certainly done nothing to prevent his being so. Ravenswood remarked that I was put out, and asked the cause; and upon my informing him that the delay at Derby was

disagreeable to me, philosophically remarked, that, as it was very disagreeable to me, and very agreeable to him, we had better strike an average, and both be indifferent to it.

I thought him an ass.

I did not tell him so; I think a great many men asses, but I do not think it necessary to tell them so. Indeed, I believe most of us consider every one whose opinion differs materially from our own as qualified for that epithet. I think men in love are peculiarly apt to entertain disparaging opinions about others; the object that occupies their thoughts is so overwhelming, that they consider any indifference to it as positive deficiency; at least, so I thought then. I know, when our court-martial did assemble,

it struck me that the prisoner exhibited a most undue and incomprehensible interest in the proceedings (which terminated in seven years' transportation). I wondered at the grave and earnest attention bestowed upon the case by the court, and still more at the delays that it tolerated—keeping me away from Beauchamp. I do not think that I myself gave as much attention as I ought to have given to the evidence; and, indeed, I found great difficulty in keeping my attention rivetted to any subject. But as our conviction in the first case was unanimous, I presume that it was correct. It occupied one whole day, however. The second took one and a half. The third was delayed by the illness of the witness mentioned by Colonel Howard.

CHAPTER X.

THE VESSEL RIGHTING AFTER THE SQUALL —
POACHERS BEWARE—THE ALL-CONNECTER—THE
STRIKING INTO THE RIGHT PATH—THE SHADOW
OF A CLOUD—THE SPREADING OF A SNARE—WOE.

OWING to the dangerous illness of the witness, to whom I alluded in the last chapter, and whose testimony was indispensable, the court-martial lasted an unusual length of time, and several days elapsed before we were able to return to Carlton, during which time, as Ravenswood informed me, just before we started on our homeward journey,

he recovered his senses, and became himself again. It was strange, he said, but the very first morning when he woke in a town, and heard the rattle of the carriages, and the trampling of the horses, and the voices of the carmen, and, in short, the sounds of a city, he felt all sentiment oozing, as it were, out of him; he felt armed for the battle of life, and mailed against the weapons of love.

“The city, Cobb,” he said, “is an arena of gladiators; the country the fool’s paradise of swains. In the country, the many reduce themselves to one; in the town, the one dissolves into the many. The wonder to me now is, that I was such a fool as to be enslaved by such a flirt.”

“My dear fellow,” replied I, thinking,


I am sorry to say, with no little exultation at how infinitely superior my choice was to his, "all watches do not keep time together, and if the heart does sometimes go a little faster than the head, it is nothing but an excursion. It soon comes home again."

"Very true," replied he; "but it finds the fire out."

"Well," we are not vestal virgins," returned I; "that is not a capital offence; try one of the lucifers we were talking about. There's Miss Hargreaves."

"I think Miss Waldgrave would suit me better," replied he, with an abominable coolness.

"Upon my soul," I answered, "you have recovered quickly from all your grief. I don't think you'll break your heart in a



hurry; the moment you've got out of one flirtation, you think you are to go head and ears into another."

"Why, it was your advice," retorted he, in some surprise; for he was not by any means aware of anything passing, or being likely to pass, between Edith and me; "it was you that suggested to me to try Miss Hargreaves."

"Oh, I don't care a d——n for that; it would suit Miss Hargreaves very well, I dare say; that is quite another sort of thing; she's made for a garrison hack, but all girls are not." I had serious thoughts at the moment of jamming *his* side of the car against a large cart, loaded with stone, that we were passing. I dare say the damage might have been repaired for a couple of

language of regenerated intellect (I perceived Doidy's mouth again enlarging);—
music is now only dim murmurings of the
language of the soul in its pure state, before
it was debased by its connexion with clay,
hereafter to become its speech, when re-
leased from the trammels of the flesh."

"Then I suppose a comic song finds no
great favour in your eyes," remarked I.

"A comic song," returned he, with a
gesture of abhorrence, "is little better than
a sacrilegious indecency, against which all
minds not aboriginally and hopelessly vulgar
revolt intuitively. It is a monstrosity on
the same footing as a woman in man's
clothes, a diamond ring in a pig's snout, a
camelia decorating a puppy dog's tail;
a comic song is the offspring of 'Beauty

and the Beast,' born on a dunghill, and bred in a pigsty."

"The Muses pledging their robes for gin," suggested I; "Apollo, overtaken by Barclay and Perkins, resorting to the stomach-pump."

"Faugh!" said he, "don't let us talk of such trash as comic songs."

Upon our arrival at Carlton, Johnny surrendered his command with great dignity, reporting that the conduct of the detachment had been exemplary during my absence, and inviting Ravenswood and myself to a grand dinner at Beauchamp Hall upon the following Thursday—an invitation which that gentleman, rather to my surprise, accepted.

So much for the rattle of cabs, thought I.

I wonder would the noise of carriages have the same effect on Ellen O'Reilly.

The colour-sergeant now brought me my letters, which had rather accumulated during my absence. The first I opened was from Hawkins:—

“DEAR COBB,

“Many thanks for your judicious advice and kind encouragement. I shall act as you recommend; and as soon as I can possibly get leave you may expect to hear from me. It is a nervous time, but certainly I am happier now that I have made up my mind in the right direction. I cannot think that I am doomed to encounter disappointment; but still hope is not very strong within me. I wish I had

your buoyancy of spirit, that *will* not give in. I long for the moment that I may start for the rectory, yet tremble at what must ensue when I arrive there, still more at what may ensue.

“Yours sincerely,

“JAMES HAWKINS.”

I confess to some little amusement as I compared the tone of this letter with that of the epistle wherewith this history opened, in which Ellen was bequeathed to me, and I occupied the twelve miles between Ballykillcavanagh and Ballymaccrocodile in thinking what she was like. There was another letter for me from my lady mother, urging me still more strongly to come to Cowes, telling me that Lady Mesopo-

tamia had promised "*so kindly*" to take me up; and dwelling at still greater length upon the charms, amiability, eligibility, and fifty thousands, of the Miss Wallingfords, which I considered a personal insult to myself.


I then started for Beauchamp Hall. I had fully made up my mind then that day should not pass without declaring my passion for Edith; the few days I had spent separated from her had been so intolerable. But no man knows what a day may bring forth. Lady Elizabeth received me much as usual, but there was something in Edith's manner that struck a chill into me at once. It was a coldness so slight as hardly to be discernible, but so perceptible as to be unquestionable. I endeavoured, as

far as I could, to prevent its affecting my manner towards her, for, whatever it might be, I had no wish to hurry on a quarrel, which, however it might be deferred, come when it might, would come a great deal too soon for me. I am afraid I succeeded but indifferently, for she seemed to grow more and more constrained. Sometimes I fancied that I could discern an expression of reproach brooding for a moment on her countenance; and yet perfectly certain was I that I had given her no cause to reproach me.

I spoke of the regret with which I had found that I should be detained so much longer at Derby, and explained how it was inevitable; and she positively looked as if she disbelieved every syllable I said; and

for the first time, when Lady Elizabeth, according to her custom, expressed a hope that I would stay dinner, Edith forbore to add the expression of her hopes too. Determined, if possible, to sift this mysterious matter to the bottom, I did not wait to be pressed, but accepted at once. Then there came another phenomenon, which again puzzled me.

Before this day, whether in the drawing-room, or rambling about the lawn, or sauntering through the conservatories, Edith and I had constantly found ourselves with nobody else near us, until it had become so completely a matter of course, that it attracted no remark or observation from us or anybody else; but to-day, during the hour and half that intervened between my



arrival and dinner, somehow or other she contrived that nothing of that sort should happen; and it appeared to me that Nina was conspiring with her to that end, for she seemed determined not to leave us. I had brought a few books with me from Derby, and mentioning them in conversation, offered to lend them to Edith; but she made some excuse for declining the loan, though previously she had not scrupled to borrow as many as she wanted of me.

I felt exceedingly disappointed and distressed at this; but another feeling began now slowly, and against my will, to make its painful way from the very depths of my soul; I mean the suspicion—which, a day ago, I should have considered too monstrous to be entertained for a moment—that Edith

was little more than the heartless coquette which I knew Nina to be. Some such element might have lurked unperceived by others, and even unsuspected by herself, in her character, until the double occasion, the opportunity of gratifying the taste for conquest, together with the presence of Nina, to stimulate and encourage the attempt, might have brought out the hidden demon into life and activity. I dismissed the idea in a moment, as unworthy of myself and her alike; but it would recur nevertheless, the more so as I fancied that I perceived a malignant expression of triumph in Nina's countenance, as if the two girls were conspiring to lead me in chains, and then mock me. The idea was unbearable, but it was difficult to get rid of.

It may be supposed that I did not spend a particularly pleasant evening. Lady Elizabeth observed that I was depressed, and in her innocence attributed my dejection to the circumstance of some incident of a painful character having occurred to me in the performance of my judicial duties—perhaps the necessity of sentencing a fellow creature to an untimely and disgraceful death. She endeavoured to console me, by reminding me that Samuel did not hesitate at hewing Agag to pieces when he knew that it was his duty so to do. The remark was well meant, but I cannot say that I derived much consolation from it.

“You come back from Derby very, very glum, Captain Cobb,” said Nina; “was your colonel cross to you?”

"No," I answered, "I never saw our colonel out of temper in my life."

"Oh, you story teller," said she, "all colonels are cross, and some captains," added she, significantly. "Perhaps you have had bad news from your friends in Ireland?"

"No, indeed," said I, brightening up a little; for when one is in trouble, any good deed that one may chance to have done at any time, is sure to present itself in the shape of a crumb of comfort. "All the news I have had from Ireland is of the most gratifying nature that can be: I can desire no better."

"And that makes you so grave," said she; "it must be something very important."

"Well," replied I, "to the parties concerned, perhaps it is."

"And you keep it all to yourself, like the dog in the manger, you cross curmudgeon," pursued she. "Why don't you tell us all about it, and let us enjoy the news too?"

"I do not know that you would enjoy it," returned I; "and I am sure Miss Waldgrave would not."

"There," said Nina, turning triumphantly to Edith; "I told you so. Oh, he is very, very deep—very secret; he lets nothing out."

"It would be premature," remarked I; which, indeed, would have been the case, for in addition to the traditional slips between the cup and the lip—though I knew that Hawkins meant to propose for

Ellen, I was by no means certain, however decided an opinion. I might have formed upon the subject, that she would accept him, at least at first. Undoubtedly he had used her very badly; and though I have been credibly informed, by witnesses of unimpeachable veracity, that ill-usage very often causes woman's love to burn more brightly and purely, I did not at that moment discover any very positive confirmation of that doctrine in my own breast—quite the contrary. I think a good-sized and not particularly sweet-tempered hyæna fairly at bay, and engaged in a professional debate with the hunters, with an arrow or two sticking in its side, would have been a much better emblem of me than a deserted dove; however, it might be otherwise with

Ellen O'Reilly, and I hoped for her sake that it was so.

"Premature—pooh!" said Nina. "Come, confess, and be hanged."


"In my opinion," exclaimed I, "it is time enough to confess after one is hanged; but I do not suppose *you* at least have much to learn about my news from Ireland. I daresay you are thoroughly *au courant*."

"How do you know that?" replied she; "why should you suppose that I know anything about your news from Ireland? it is nothing to me. I don't care anything—I don't know anything—about it."

"Well, then," answered I, "I have no right to disclose a matter in which another is concerned, so I shall hold my tongue."

"There," said she, again appealing to Edith—"I told you so."

Edith received this remark with a peculiar and melancholy smile, in which I fancied I remarked an expression of resignation which seemed to me to embody a much greater amount of regret than the withholding of a piece of gossip which could not be very interesting to her would account for; still, though not particularly pleased with her, I could not bear seeing her put out about anything, and was on the point of taking the entire family into my confidence about the loves of Ellen and Hawkins, by telling the whole story right out, when I caught Nina's eye fixed upon me with such an expression of malignant triumph glaring from it, that the accursed



idea that I was being made the dupe and the butt of a couple of heartless flirts, rose suddenly, gaunt and grim in my mind, and sealed my mouth.

It was a dreary evening. Edith, gloomy and reserved, held me steadily at arms' length, and, without ever falling into the slightest incivility, resisted any and every attempt I could make to engage her in anything like a separate conversation, which, indeed, had she been so inclined, Nina would have prevented, for she seemed determined to attach herself to me, and I began to suspect that, having found that the smiles she had lavished on Johnny had not produced the desired return, she proposed transferring them to me, in the hope that it might prove a better investment.

I need not say that, were such the case, they were by no means likely to receive a hearty welcome, and I most assuredly gave her no encouragement. Lady Elizabeth, dimly perceiving that something was wrong, felt the influence of the mantle of lead, and was unusually prosy about the court of George the Fourth and the beauty of some pre-adamite viscountesses, who, I have no doubt, were so many coronetted Venuses, but I took no interest in them.

“You need not come here any more till you are in better humour,” said Nina, playfully (that is to say, with her claws sheathed), as I rose to repart; “we don’t want any one that is cross, and besides, with so much to think of yourself, you are not likely to be good company again for some time to come.”

I did not at the time understand the allusion or its drift, but Nina had a way of making little mysteries, and I was in no humour to investigate it. Edith made no comment upon this abrupt warning off—which, before my trip to Derby, would have elicited an immediate and emphatic disclaimer from her; and when I shook hands with her there was an indescribable numbness in the dead cold grasp that sent a chilly shudder all over my frame.

I could not marshal my thoughts into anything like order as I walked slowly home that night. I could not make out what I felt, still less what I ought to feel. The gloomy shadow of disappointment fell thick and black upon me; but whether it was brought on myself by my own act, or

the unjust infliction of one who certainly *ought* not to have been hard upon me, I could not tell. Possibly Johnny might be able to enlighten me on the subject.

CHAPTER XI.

BIRDLIME AT A DISCOUNT—THE SHADOW OF THE
CLOUD—THE HEART AND THE BRAIN WHEEL-
ING ROUND ONE ANOTHER—LE PREMIER PAS
QUI COUTE—FEMALE FENCING—CONSOLATORY
DREAM.

As it was still early when I arrived at Carlton, I had hopes of finding Johnny up. I was anxious to see him that night, and to discover as far as I could what had passed during my absence; for the reader will recollect, that, having started for Beauchamp immediately upon my arrival from Derby, I had had no opportunity of having

any conversation with him. I was not disappointed; indeed, he wanted to see me, too, and had strolled a little way out on the road to meet me.

"You were quite right about Nina, Cobb," said he; "I thought she would have eaten me alive. One day I was to ride with her; another day kept me holding silk for an hour, making eyes at me all the time; then she consulted me about all manner of things, the strangest things in the world; she said there ought to be no want of confidence between her and me; and she told me all about Ravenswood, and what difficulty she had in keeping him from making love to her."

"She lied in that instance, Johnny," remarked I, parenthetically.

"Oh, no!" said Johnny, innocently. "She told me herself that he wanted to be so very, very intimate with her, but that she would have nothing to say to him, because she was sure that he was hard-hearted, and had no trust in women."

"And I suppose she gave you credit for a lively faith," said I. "Was that the view she took of your character, eh?"

"Yes," replied my callow chick. "She said I was a very different person from him, and that when I smiled it was a smile, and not a sneer."

"And you believed her?"

"Well, what else could I do? but still I did not like her. She hates you so; I could see that plain enough by her manner of speaking of you, though I never heard

her say anything directly against you. I'd have pitched into her if she had. Besides, I don't feel particularly inclined to fall in love with anybody just now."

"Then she could make nothing of you, Johnny?" said I.

"Nothing," replied that Derbyshire Joseph, pulling up his shirt collar with rather a strut.

"I kept her off, and she's given it up as a bad job these two days. She's barely civil to me now—hates me like poison, I dare say. Devil may care!"

"But," said I, "could you make out why she hated me? What sort of things used she to say about me?"

"Well, she did not so much say things against you individually, as against the army in general, and include you; whereas

she used always to say that I was not like the rest."

"About what was it, then?" I asked.
"What were the crimes she laid to our charge?"

"Oh! she used to say that officers were all male flirts; that they all considered girls as playthings, that were to amuse them whilst they were quartered in a place, and then to be flung aside when they left it. She said that they consigned their loves to one another, like bales of goods; and that a friend of yours had left you a legacy of the sort at the last place you were quartered at; and I could not deny that, for I remembered the letter that you gave me to read on the line of march between Ballykilkavanagh and Ballymacrocodile; so I said

that was a very different sort of thing, and she laughed and said, 'Yes, *very* different;' and Edith got so cross then that I was rather glad to change the conversation. Oh! she does not like you, you may rely upon it; perhaps you did not pay her attention enough when she was at the rectory—she is rather *exigeante*."

"Perhaps, Johnny," suggested I, "she might have fancied that I was in some degree the cause of her not succeeding better with you."

"Oh!" said he, "I should not think that was it. I don't suppose she cared a pin about that."

"You heavenly innocent!" returned I. "Cross a woman, and fancy that she is indifferent about it! Johnny, you'll take an

apprenticeship in stealing tigresses' cubs before you are quite up to your work."

"Shall I?" said he, a little offended. "Teach your grandmother to suck eggs! Do you know, Cobb, I shall not be sorry when she is gone, either: for Edith has been infernally out of sorts for the last three or four days; and I cannot help thinking that it is Nina puts her out. Between you and I, there is no love lost between those two young ladies; though my mother likes Nina extremely, Edith does not. You know Edith is always straightforward, and hates anything like a manœuvre; and what you told me about Nina being an incurable manœvrer, is quite true. I found that out, and so did Edith, I promise you. She's quick enough, you know, though she is so

quiet. You would not think how fast she sees a thing, all the time she looks so innocent. Well, I have got nothing more to tell you, so I shall go to bed. I want to go over there to breakfast, to morrow; will you give me leave from parade?"

"Very well," said I; "good night."

"I now began to take my position into serious consideration. It was perfectly clear to me that Nina had made up her mind to do me an ill turn with Edith, and by no means certain that she had not succeeded. I thought at the moment that perhaps it would be the best plan to set Johnny to ferret out what the actual charge she had brought against me was; for I could not suppose that the vague generality of including all officers in the one common

category of flirts of the masculine gender could have effected so complete a change in Edith's behaviour and manner to me. Since I had discovered Nina's affair with Ravenswood, too (to say nothing of the unscrupulous manner in which she set about justifying herself on the subject), that young lady had appeared to my eyes as a much more dangerous antagonist than before. It was impossible to say what stories about me she might have picked up from him, or what a mess they might make cooked up with a trifle of pepper, salt, and a bay leaf. For a dash of pungency, a touch of wit, or a poetical turn, will make a very large story out of a very small fact; and I had little doubt that, under the circumstance, Nina would season with a liberal

hand. However, I was in too complete a whirl and confusion of sorrow and anger, vain repinings and fierce resolutions, to arrive at any definite plan as to the course to be pursued, and I went to bed, having come to only one decision, which was, that whatever it was, it should not very long remain unsettled. I found great comfort in this resolution. I believe one generally does in stout-hearted determinations, only then there is that confounded difficulty to come—the carrying them out.

The next morning I gave Johnny his instructions, which that youth received with great gravity and earnestness, entertaining no doubt but that Edith—all openness and confidence—would never dream of withholding anything from him, and pro-

mising to put me *au fait* to the whole thing in the course of the day, adding, that he *had* observed that for the last three or four days she had never mentioned my name to him; whereas, as he said, "Before that, she used never to be tired talking of you; she was always asking questions about you, and telling my mother of the clever things you used to say, and the strange stories you used to tell her; and she frightened old Hargreaves into fits once, by calling him Captain Hargreaves; he'd as soon have been called Satan. However, never mind, I'll find out what's the matter with her."

I did not share Johnny's confidence in his exploring undertaking. There are things that brothers are the last to hear of; and unfortunately this was one of them.

However, it is a good doctrine never to throw away a chance; so I watched Johnny's figure receding in the distance, with as much hope as I could conjure up, as Ravenswood and I sat down to breakfast.

"Where's Waldgrave?" asked my companion.

"He's gone over to Beauchamp Hall," replied I; "he said he wanted to be there early. I suppose they are going on some expedition."

"Do you think so?" said Ravenswood, looking disappointed; "then they'll all be away."

"I fancied so," I answered, "but I really knew nothing about it; don't act upon anything I say, for it is only my conjecture."

"I had thought of going over there myself," said he; "I want to get the first meeting with Nina over, and I had rather do it at once. I do not know how I may like facing anything of the sort before a large company."

"Very true," I remarked; "it would be pleasanter, or at least, less unpleasant, to say nothing of the having it over. However, I do not imagine you are in danger of a scene, for she has known so long that you are here, and that you will come to dinner, that she must be thoroughly prepared by this time, and I do not think her feelings will overpower her."


"I have no doubt but that she has the self-possession of the devil," returned my friend; "the one feeling she has is the

craving for a sensation, but I am not quite so confident of my own steadiness under fire."

"What *must* be done is commonly well done," I answered. "Put your trust in fate."

"That word **MUST** is a great solver of riddles and opener of doors," returned Ravenswood. "Necessity is a good steeple-chase rider, keeps one's head very straight, and crams one very hard at one's fences; nevertheless, I should prefer a smaller audience at my first interview. Suppose we stroll over there to-day, and take our chance?"

"Oh, I shall be busy all day," replied I, somewhat disturbed at this proposition; "I shall not be able to go over there; I've got a lot of letters to write."



"I should not have thought you were troubled with many letters," said he. "Recorded thought, perishable yet not evanescent, seldom enters much into the philosophy of our life."

"Perhaps not; but recorded figures, and not figures of thought do, confound them!" said I. "All dunning letters should be detained at the Post Office."

"Ah!" said he, "the Post Office; if that great volcano of talking lava were to close all its outlets, what an earthquake would ensue."

"It is a porcupine," said I, "that shoots pens instead of quills."

"It is the great digester of the body politic," said he, "that assimilates all, and rejects none."

I spent the rest of that day fidgetting and fussing. I believe the men thought I was gone mad, for my habit had always been to take things quietly ; indeed, rigid disciplinarians used to say, that when I invoked the god of battles to train my company to their duty, I took care not to embarrass the regimental Mars with any officious assistance of my own, to which I used to reply, that I made it a rule never to do anything for myself that I could possibly persuade any one else to do for me, and as I invariably acted on the maxim, they might see whether it worked well or not. Ravenswood went over to Beauchamp Hall, and Johnny subsequently described to me his interview with Nina.

That young gentleman returned before

dinner, exceedingly disgusted with the result of his undertaking. He, as indeed I had partly anticipated, could make nothing of Edith. She declared that she had no quarrel with me, that she had *no right* to quarrel with me; that her manner was not changed, that if she had said or done anything uncivil she was very sorry for it, and hoped I would forgive her; that she could not always be very gay and cheerful; that she was subject to low spirits; that she had sometimes reasons for them; that she did not know why I should think her altered; that she thought it was very odd, and did not see why I should care for it, or think about it at all, but was sorry that anything should give me uneasiness; was sure she never intended it, but supposed that I knew

how to console myself, and hoped I would do so, and did not think that Johnny had any business to quarrel with her about it, and then began to cry.

Such was Johnny's report, and in further conversation with him on the subject, I gathered from him that he had really lost his temper with her, and told her that there was no dependence to be placed upon her, and that any woman might be proud of his friend Cobb's notice, and that she didn't deserve it; and that after her bursting into tears, he heard Nina reproaching her with her weakness, and telling her not to make such a fool of herself, or let any one else make a fool of her; and that he had subsequently a smart passage of arms with Nina on my behalf, in which he suddenly found

his hands strengthened by an unexpected ally, for in the middle of the debate Ravenswood appeared. Ravenswood he described as being pale and agitated at first, but as having speedily rallied, and remarked that Edith was in low spirits, which he attributed to the electric state of the atmosphere, and said that life and electricity were the same things, to which Nina demurred, asking how it came that people lived before any electric machines were invented, she was sure there were none before the flood; and that Ravenswood said that electricity was the great driving wheel of creation, which Johnny did not understand, but would get me to explain to him when I had time; and that after Ravenswood was gone, Nina became so snappish and disagreeable to him


that he would not stay for dinner, and was not sure that he would dine there any more until she was gone, except on that grand day when we were to meet the dignitaries of the neighbourhood—and that she might go to the d—l.

I think that I rather wished that she might avail herself of this kind permission, at least I should have offered no opposition. Ravenswood returned soon afterwards in high spirits.

“I stood it like a rock, Cobb,” he said. “I am very glad it is over; now I feel myself safe, for I know I am indifferent about her; I don’t care a brass farthing about her; in short, I am free.”

The evening wore slowly on, and at last it became necessary somehow to go to bed. I

hated the idea of going to bed; I had nothing to expect from it. I hoped for no rest—I was tired, I was broken spirited, I was wearied, I was what is emphatically called “done.” I had a headache, I had a heartache, I had throbbings in my veins, I had pains in my limbs, I had twitches in my nerves, and I had no hope. I thought of the proverb, “without hope the heart would break.” I wondered whether mine would, or whether it was not too tough, and would only keep me alive to suffer. I thought of blowing my brains out—but what would Lady Caroline say! I hope I never shall pass such a night again. I wish I had not passed that; it brought thoughts into my head that had no business there—they were not right; but I thought of



Prometheus on his rock, and the vulture, and wondered was I too condemned to live and suffer beyond human endurance. In due time, however, I fell asleep.

I do not believe much in portents or omens, but I had an odd dream. I dreamed that the devil came, looked searchingly at me, shook his head, and turned hopelessly away. I did not see the antagonist angel that protects man from himself; indeed, I had no eye for angels that night. When I began dimly and imperfectly to awake, I awoke with a sort of feeling that when things are at the worst they mend. I awoke more thoroughly, and became alive again, and then I remembered how often I had despaired for a moment, and then found my spirit rise again, and shake itself clear;

and how I had seen and confronted difficulties I had thought fatal; and found that, when I took them stoutly by the collar, they had fairly melted out of my grasp. Faint heart never yet won fair lady, thought I; I may be wrong, and she may be wrong, but we need not be always wrong. Let us try conclusions. I certainly rose in a better mood than I lay down, but still I was very, very unhappy.

CHAPTER XII.


THE MEETING OF MEANING—THE RISING OF THE
SPECTRE—THE SEEING THROUGH GREEN GLASSES
—THE DANGEROUS LUNATICS—THE ONE MISSING
WORD—THE EVIL GENIUS—STILL WATER RUNS
DEEP—THE DARK TIME—GOOD WORKS RETURN-
ING—THE FAINT GLEAM IN THE HORIZON.

MORN on the mountains—and out I rode into the fresh, cool, morning air, to try if its balmy breath would assuage the fire that was raging in my brain. I could not bear to remain in the barracks. I had no particular place to go to; but as I rode out of the barrack gate my old mare turned to the

right of her own accord, broke into a canter, and carried me I knew not whither, but somehow or other she kept constantly ascending, and in a short time I found I had attained a considerable elevation; and whether it was that the sharper air, or a feeling of exhilaration produced by riding, as it were, braced my temper, I know not, but I found a very considerable change take place in the view I took of the position of affairs. I began to think I was exceedingly hardly used; that it behoved me to exhibit a proper spirit, and not to submit patiently to the caprice of a wayward girl; in short, to assert my dignity as a man, and treat fickleness with the scorn it deserved.

Monstrous fine resolutions!

I had been out about four or five hours, when it suddenly occurred to me that my horse was getting tired, which, as the poor animal was, I suppose, approaching its twentieth mile, was not very wonderful. As, however, I had not gone straight on end, but wandered about in various directions, the distance from home was not so great as it might have been, and I knew from what I could see that I was not more than seven or eight miles from Carlton. I speedily also began to suspect that I had executed a half circle, which had placed Beauchamp Park in a right line between me and my home, and as it was so, I thought I might as well just look in on my road home. Perhaps the conversation with Johnny might have mollified Edith (I



meant, brought her to her senses), and if she could be persuaded to listen to me for a few moments (that is to say, to apologise, and promise more steadiness in future), I might succeed in convincing her of the utter falsity of the imputations which had estranged her from me (that is to say, I might take her into favour again), and heaven knows what the result might have been. I was not a gentleman that ever suffered grass to grow under my feet. I turned my horse's head in that direction, and sauntered slowly along. About a mile from Beauchamp I met Edith and Nina riding together, and away on the wings of the four winds of heaven flew all my fine resolutions.

I could have kissed the very ground she trod on.

In her manner to me, however, there was no favourable change apparent. Calm and collected, she simply wished me good morning, and though she held out her hand as usual, there was no warmth in her greeting. I turned to ride with them, and when we were again in motion, I discovered that the two young ladies had so contrived that Nina was between her and me, which arrangement continued till I left them at the park gates.

“Your friend Mr. Ravenswood was here yesterday,” said Nina; “I think he gets bitterer than ever. To be sure, there were only we two poor women, and men never spare women.”

“What was Ravenswood’s offence?” I asked.

“Contradicting me, the horrid savage!” answered she. “I hate being contradicted.”

“And pray on what subject, may I ask?” I inquired, wondering whether Nina’s fertility of invention would help her out of this, for she could not well tell me that it was defending me from her strictures that called out Ravenswood’s contradictions.”

“Oh, about all sorts of things,” returned she, carelessly,—“officers’ flirtations and deceitful practices; and then he says such grave and solemn things, it is like a book talking; and talking of books, have you read the last novel of Bulwer’s, and which do you prefer, Bulwer or D’Israeli?”

She had got off the dangerous ground now, pretty skilfully. I gave my award between the “Last of the Barons” and the

“First of the Rabbi’s,” and which I decided in favour of, I regret to say, I do not now recollect. Edith said little or nothing, but seemed to assume an appearance of injured innocence that began to irritate me exceedingly; for, mortified as I was, I felt that I had been condemned unjustly, because without the opportunity of defending myself, which, guilty or innocent, I ought to have had; and I could plainly perceive that a rebellious spirit was rising within me whose rise might be timed, not by days, nor yet by hours, but by minutes. I think Nina remarked this, for she observed, “Why, you get crosser and crosser every day, and you ought to get milder and better-humoured *now*.”


I could not for the life of me see why I

ought. At that particular period, I thought I had truth enough to qualify a saint for four grains of blue pill; but I suppose the two young ladies saw very good cause, for I observed them interchange glances of intelligence, which still farther confirmed me in the idea that I was being made a fool of; and when we parted my anger had taken a definite form, a reality that considerably facilitated the course I was rapidly resolving on—viz., to withdraw from all attempts even at friendship with Edith.

Friendship, indeed, was impossible.

I did not see her again until the dinner to the rustic magnates. I do not recollect much about the dinner. I do not think there was a lord, but suppose there was a baronet, though I cannot say that I observed

who it was took Lady Elizabeth in. I know I sat next a fat, middle-aged, snub-nosed woman, with a great topaz necklace, who was a desperate and alarming admirer of Wordsworth, and drove me distracted with a long, weak, washy, everlasting flood of encomiums upon that gentleman's waggoner, who, I most sincerely wished had picked up my neighbour and driven her off to the uttermost ends of the world, and left her there. The fact was, that the lady in question was the exemplary wife of a neighbouring gentleman of the most unspotted character, beloved by all who knew her, and a pattern of the domestic virtues, with a highly cultivated mind; and though I differed with her about the waggoner (and do so still), I believe has a remarkably cor-



rect taste in literature; but of course, at that time and place all these considerations did not weigh with me one pin's point, and I wished her comfortably tombed in the family sarcophagus, together with Mr. John Watson, jun., who sat on Edith's right hand, and Lieutenant Ravenswood, of the Light Company of the 120th Regiment, who sat upon her left.

I dare say the reader thinks me a fool; I dare say he would have been another under similar circumstances. I don't think he would have picked up Mrs. Boothby's pocket handkerchief which she dropped twice, and her gloves which she dropped once, without swearing, as I did, thereby honouring the maxim, "*Equamemento rebus in arduis servare mentem,*" which that shrewd Ul-

tonian and mighty hunter before the Lord, Boyd, used to translate, "Remember, when you get a fall, never let your mare get away from you—mind that!" I do not think he would have, as Byron said of Marceau, "kept the whiteness of his soul;" which I, being only a captain, utilitized into a clear head and a bright look out. If he differs with me, I hope he will retain his opinion, for I am too good a Christian to wish him ever in a position that will call in his experience to rectify his judgment. The words of experience are the guides of ages, but we need not write them on our own skins with red-hot poker.

Of course I sat down with the fixed determination of never once taking the slightest notice of Edith, or looking at

her, or anywhere in the direction of where she was sitting, all dinner time,—it would have been such an admission of interest, such a false move, so *infra dig.* I do not know why the soup came round so slowly; I suppose that in Lady Elizabeth's establishment the butler was slow and steady, and the rest of the servants *regis ad exemplar*; but before my portion of *consommé de volaille* (they put the combs in, which I disapprove of) reached me, I had caught her eye fixed upon me with that melancholy expression of reproach which had already puzzled me so much. What cause she had for reproaching me, or even for quarrelling with me, was beyond my philosophy. I had seen women often enough do what they call "trying a man;" that is

to say, saying or doing something that, as a matter of course, *must* irritate him extremely, and then wonder at his being irritated. But I acquitted Edith of this mild variety of idiotcy. I suppose the glare of Mrs. Boothby's topazes attracted her eye, for I caught it several times afterwards during dinner, which I think lasted about six hours. I do not wonder at the attraction of the topazes; each of them was about the size and appearance of a decanter of sherry.

After the ladies retired, I engaged in several single combats with gentlemen upon several very opposite subjects. I confuted Mr. Hargreaves upon the difference between fixed and floating capital, and defeated young Mr. de Popkinsonne about the age of

the Marchioness of Mesopotamia, a triumph which I owed entirely to myself; for having discovered that he did not know the colour of her liveries, I concluded that he was a mere pretender to fashion, a pinchbeck genealogist, and assumed a certain hardihood of assertion which I should not have so readily ventured upon had his knowledge of high life been equal to his desire of getting credit for it. I discovered, notwithstanding my troubles, with my customary sagacity, that young Mr. de Popkinsonne embittered his existence and exhausted his energies in the endeavour not to be thought a snob. I cannot say that I did much to forward his praiseworthy views on that subject; but a man crossed in love is not likely to overflow with loving kindness for

any one; indeed, it is well if he keeps out of mischief, for he is never very far removed from a dangerous maniac.

True, there are certain laws in society that we are so much in the habit of deferring to, that that habit becomes, not second nature, for that is a mere phrase of the philosophers, but dominant nature, just as men risk life and soul alike for a point of honour. But look at the lower animals, they show what, under such circumstances, the fetters of convention being removed, nature does. Nature fights.

Again, when we returned to the drawing-room, I found that Nina was determined to enforce the separate system she had established between Edith and me; but all her vigilance—and I must do her the justice to

say that it was most draconical in its character—was unequal to the task of keeping up a perpetual quarantine, the more so as it seemed to me that Edith, if she did not actually wish for some conversation with me, at all events by no means avoided it so sedulously as before. At last Nina was persuaded to sit down to sing. A song does not last many minutes; but that was something; the opportunity appeared, and I pounced upon it with the stoop of a hawk. Edith was standing alone, returning some music-books that had been displaced to find the music required by Nina, and I was at her side in a second.

“Why is your manner so changed towards me?” I asked. “What have I done?”


“Really,” returned she, “I am not aware

that you have anything to complain of me. If I have been neglectful of any civility I ought to have offered you, I am very sorry. I hope I shall never forget the attention due to so kind a friend and guide as you have always shown yourself to my brother."

"D——n your brother," was the thought which, I regret being compelled to confess, flashed across my mind at that moment. "It was not thus," I said,—“not simply as the friend of your brother that you used to talk to me; before the court-martial at Derby I used to think that you considered me a friend of your own."

"Certainly, as a friend," replied she; "I shall always consider you as a friend. I hope always to entertain feelings of the greatest regard towards both you and"——

she stopped at the word *and*—a most unfortunate stop. One word more would have saved both her and me much unnecessary misery; but that word, which would have elicited light from the darkness, remained unspoken; I filled up the gap as I best might, and took it into my head that it meant Ravenswood. I do not say that there was any sense in that conjecture of mine. These are Confessions of Country Quarters, not the autobiography of Solon. Now, the placing Ravenswood upon a footing of equality, which in my then state of mind of course meant rivalry, with me, roused a spirit that was not to be lightly laid,—even that absurd conversation that the reader may recollect having passed between him and me, as we drove out of Derby, and my equally absurd



irritation, came out into strong relief. "The trifles light as air" were to me "confirmation strong as proofs of holy writ."

"It was not thus that you and I used to talk of one another, and to one another, a week ago," said I, bitterly; "you change quickly."

"I am wiser now," said she, colouring violently; "I may be sadder, though I am afraid I am not better; for a week ago I had more faith, more hope, even more charity."

"But," urged I, "what is my offence?—why speak in enigmas and parables?"

"The enigmas and parables must be as plain as a printed page to your conscience," returned she.

"My conscience acquits me," said I, beginning to get exceedingly angry.

"It must be a very convenient one," returned she, quietly but markedly.

"But what is my crime?" demanded I.

"I accuse you of no crime," said she.

"Of what then?" I persisted; and whether it was that my vehemence cowed her, or that my obstinate demand to know what it was that she had against me, and to be put fairly upon my trial, excited in her mind some suspicion of the egregious error under which she was labouring and suffering, she seemed suddenly to melt.

"Oh, Captain Cobb!" exclaimed she, "I did not expect this of you, and I did not deserve it."

At this moment Nina, who had acquired an evil influence over Edith, completed her song, and instantly approached us.

“What are you two talking about so earnestly,” said she; and then suddenly turning deadly pale, retreated. I learned afterwards that I had fixed upon her a look of such demoniac ferocity, that even she positively quailed under it—not indeed, I think, without good reason, for her conscience must have told her then, if the storm did burst, there would be wild work, but that unfortunate moment completed her evil work; the very sight of her, the sound of her voice, the malicious twinkle in her eye, the half-concealed sneer, hardened Edith’s better heart at once; she drew herself up with great dignity.

“Let it be understood that we meet as friends,” said she, “and only as friends, for the future.”

"As friends, is impossible," I answered.

"So be it then," she replied, with a slight tremor in her voice; "it is your choice; unfriendly *I cannot* be, but I do not wonder that *you* should."

This last blow crushed the little patience I had left: to say that she left me otherwise than angry would be absurd—indeed, incredible. I was angry—and something more. I was more desperately in love with Edith than ever, but my faith in her was gone. I had ceased to suppose that the altered relations between her and me arose from any well-grounded suspicion, ascertained or even imagined delinquency on my part. The evident state of communication in which she and Nina appeared to be, the interchange of looks, the constant keep-

ing together, staggered me. It seemed to me also that even if I had offended her, there was an obstinate unforgiveness—a new feature in her character that was not to be lightly regarded. In short, I arrived at the conclusion, that either I had grossly deceived myself in my estimate of her character, and had flung away a fervent and sincere passion upon an object utterly unworthy, or that even if she were naturally possessed of estimable qualities, she whom I had supposed the perfect model of all womankind, the embodiment of the womanly virtues undimmed by womanish failings, had so little inherent strength of character as not to be able to bear a fortnight's contact with so inferior a nature as Nina's.

I left the house in a tempest of conflict.

ing passion that was perfectly awful. I have not in these Confessions found myself compelled to record any very violent ebullition of anger, or any malignancy of disposition; but the fearful state of mind in which I returned home that night was one that I hope none of us may be soon called upon to witness, still less to experience.

It was with me as with many of the quiet-going ones of the world, the demon within sleeps very sound, and wakes slowly, unready and unwillingly; but once fairly roused, he is the very devil indeed.

What I said, what I did, what I thought, what I felt, how I lived, how I should have died, had my hour arrived, during the next month, are matters beyond the pale of this

confessional. I have been thankful in after-life that that unhappy period was passed among those who were more merciful to me than I was merciful to myself and others, and that no record exists save in a friendly memory of scenes best buried in oblivion. The first time that I felt as a Christian should feel, was upon the receipt of the following letter from Hawkins:—

“DEAR COBB,

“I cannot suffer one post to leave this place without communicating to you the happiness that has within the last hour become mine, but which I cannot but feel I owe entirely to you. The very instant I could get leave I hurried here, and the fondest wishes of my heart are now grati-

fied. I am sure that you will rejoice in my happiness, and not the less that the good work is your own. Once more receive my heartiest thanks for the wise and kindly guidance under which I have attained the greatest blessing heart can desire, and believe me, my dear Cobb,

“ Ever your most attached

“ And grateful friend,

“ JAMES HAWKINS.”

This letter affected me even to tears, and I think that flow of tears removed a weight and a bandage from my brain. I became more myself again. I probably need not say that I had not, during this long dark period, visited Beauchamp, nor was the name of that place ever mentioned before

me; my brother officers, probably aware of what had passed that last fatal night, treated me with that kindly and affectionate forbearance that is so happily characteristic of our service, and so creditable to it, and which, I believe, I taxed with more confidence than moderation.

It was with a strange, indescribable feeling, that I sat down to congratulate Hawkins. I believe it was but an indifferent specimen of epistolary skill, and shall not inflict it upon the reader; and when I had finished it, sealed it, and despatched it, I withdrew myself again within myself, and, with a heavy heart and boding spirit, I looked back upon the past month.

It had dragged its slow length along like a wounded snake; its track was seared into

my heart, as with a hot iron. I had ceased to think life worth enduring, and death worth avoiding. Whether I mouldered away in a living tomb, or sunk at once into nothingness, I cared little; the only thing that I really wanted was to be left alone. The world to me was a lightless cavern, gloomy and drear, and damp and cold; but a little feeble mole may let the breath of heaven and the blessed sunlight into its dark recesses; and it was not very long before I found that the chilliest hour of the winter's night is the hour that precedes the dawn.

CHAPTER XIII.

DARKNESS!—LIGHT!

I DO not profess to be a philanthropist, but I sometimes do good-natured things. I did one when we were re-embarking—wet, surly, tired, and hungry—from our search for arms in the neighbourhood of Cork. I suppose I deserved some reward for it, for I certainly expected none; but, however that may be, I most assuredly had one, and one of inestimable value. When I said to the ragged, shivering urchin, that

stood on the shore, looking so wistfully at us—those words even now about to bear golden fruit—"Jump on board!"—I little dreamed that I was enlisting one in my service who should hereafter prove to me of a value by no means commensurate with his not very brilliant appearance. So it was, nevertheless.

My friend Doddy, since his arrival in England, had, as I have narrated elsewhere, rapidly modulated into civilization. First, as the reader may recollect, upon my final engagement of him at Bristol, he began to wash his face; then he extended the same desirable discipline to his hands, at the same time relieving those latter organs from duties better performed by knives and forks; then, as I had dressed

him tolerably smartly, he learned that buttons were intended to be in button-holes, and not out of them, as he had previously imagined; and, finally, having a great aptitude for small jobs, and a very ardent devotion to the fairer sex, he became a great favourite, not merely with Miss Waldgrave's maid in particular, but generally with the female portion of the household at Beauchamp Hall, who bestowed great pains upon his manners, and, I doubt not, his morals too, and accordingly were the means of reclaiming him more rapidly than any other animal of equal wildness that I ever heard of. The reader will remember the readiness with which he imitated, as far as circumstances admitted, Ambrose's habit of presenting letters on a

silver salver, and in many other respects he profited largely by the example of good order and civilized habits prevailing at Beauchamp Hall, where he did not by any means consider it necessary to discontinue his visits during the period I have just been describing.

Doddy was a highly imitative as well as amative animal; and whether it was that what he called "coortship" came to him naturally, or that, perceiving that the head gardener—a young, and, I believe, very able man—was making love to Edith's maid, he thought proper to imitate him too, I have not, to this day, accurately ascertained; but, be that as it may, the fair Abigail was touched with his devotion; and though, of course, she tyrannized over

him till he hardly dared call his soul his own, still she accorded him a certain amount of confidence, part of which related to Edith, in return for which she expected from him some amazing amount of revelations about me, which Deodatus, the divinely given, and somewhat otherwise gifted, was a good deal too wide awake to suffer himself to be drawn into.

"She does be pumpin' me, sir," said he to me the morning after I received the letter from Hawkins, "askin' me questions about your coortin' Miss Ellen."

"About what?" said I, in the sort of whisper that I believe an hippopotamus indulges in when excited.

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied the boy, in an agony of terror; "I humbly beg

your pardon if I've done anything amiss. Ave Maria ora pro nobis, — divil blister my tongue if I've said anything wrong. I didn't tell her a word about it—murder! murder!" (aside, "he'll skin me alive, and make tay of me.") "I tould her, sir, that I hadn't had the luck to enter your honner's service until you had left Bally-macrocodile, sir; and that I didn't know when you were goin' back for the weddin'."

"Going to the wedding, you young scoundrel?" said I; "what do you know about my going to the wedding?—you've been peeping into my letters!"

"May Old Nick tear my eyes out, and stick them on his tail to roast, if I ever took a look—good, bad, or indifferent—into any of your letters!" asseverated my

pale and trembling henchman,—“barrin’ looking at the sale, with the flying tom cat on it;” (Hawkins’ crest was a wyvern, or griffin, or some such heraldic poetry of zoology.) “Sure, I wouldn’t do such a dirty trick, and yer honner like a mother to me!”

“But how did you hear about the wedding?” continued I, in anything but a motherly mood or tone. “I only heard of it myself yesterday morning, and the day’s not fixed.”

“That’s what I toul’t them,” replied Doddy, looking, however, excessively puzzled; “it was just that!”

“You did tell them something,” replied I; “how dared you do that?”

“Divil the much I tould them,” returned

he, "for it wasn't much I knew; it was Miss Maria told me all about it, and how Miss Edith was ready to cry her eyes out when she heard of it, when we were at the soldier's sessions at Derby, and forbade Miss Maria ever to mention your name before her again; and took and saled up some bits of notes she had, and locked them up in the same place that she kep her father the giniral's picture, rest be to his sowl! and then sat down on the bed and didn't stir till the bell rang for dinner, and Miss Maria came in and found her sitting on the bed just as she left her, with her hands on each side of her, and her head down upon her breast, and she bid her not bother her about her hair, and took all her rings off, and went down to diinner as if she was going to her own funeral."

All this was, to me, perfectly incomprehensible. Why Edith should take any interest in Hawkins' marriage, she not being, to the best of my belief, even acquainted with him—why, even so, I should appear culpable in her eyes, were questions that I could not solve, but that I saw the necessity for solving, for their solution might involve the solution of another and dearer one. Still there came a little gleam of light, the glimmer of a clue, and I resumed my examination of Doddy.

“When did this happen?”

“The day we went to Derby, sir.”

“Did Maria tell you anything more?”

“Nothin' more, sir, only that Miss Edith has never been herself since that day.”

"And where did Miss Edith learn all this?"

"Miss Wharton told it her, sir."

"Miss Wharton!" said I; "well, I did not know that she was so deep in the O'Reilly confidence. Did Maria tell you anything about Miss Ellen's being engaged to Captain Hawkins?"

"Captain Hawkins down at Dunmanway, sir?"

"Yes."

"I never heard his name named, sir."

"Then how the deuce did they know about his being going to be married?" asked I, partly puzzled and partly angry.

"I never heard a word about her wedding, sir; faith, he might marry the Queen

of Sheba for anything they'd care about it at Beauchamp."

"Then, who in the devil's name are you talking about? who's Miss Ellen?"

"Miss Ellen O'Reilly, sir, down at Ballymacrocodile."

"And who did Miss Wharton tell Miss Waldgrave?" asked I, slowly, for a strange suspicion suddenly raised its gaunt form in my mind, "who did Miss Wharton tell Miss Waldgrave was engaged to marry Miss O'Reilly."

"Bedad, your honner ought to know that without askin' me," said the boy, looking half bewildered and half sly.

"WHO?" repeated I, in a voice of thunder, and, I have no doubt, with an aspect of indescribable ferocity.

"YOURSELF, SIR," howled the terrified Doddy.

A bright flash of light overspread my mental horizon at this simple announcement; it came like lightning, but it remained; the scales fell from my eyes, and in a moment the whole truth stood before me. How strange it seemed then that, prepared as I was for hostility on the part of Nina, I had never thought of the blow assuming this form. It was plain now, that, baffled in her attempts to obtain a "sensation" by making Johnny miserable, and attributing, not without justice, that failure to me (and, perhaps, in part to Edith), this young wild-cat had revenged her disappointment on us both by instilling into Edith's mind an idea concerning which

her pride and her delicacy alike would deter her from demanding any explanation, whilst, at the same time, it must place me before her eyes as a contemptible and hypocritical deceiver, and her before mine as a fickle, heartless flirt. I ground my teeth so savagely that Doddy thought it necessary to do the same, which recalled his presence to my recollection, fortunately enough, for I was about, according to a custom I have when much excited, to address myself aloud on the subject, in lieu of which I forthwith directed him to saddle a horse.

It was lucky for Nina she was gone. There are times when anger fairly spreads out his dark wings, and rides forth upon the blast, and woe be to those who cross

his path. If the sight, the aspect, and the voice of a man possessed by a devil has power to frighten a young lady into hysterics, I think Miss Nina would, before very many minutes were over, have felt a ball rising in her throat; indeed, it would have been only a strong effort of self-restraint that would have kept my fingers off it. I could have throttled her at that moment.

The events of my life passed rapidly that day. The time requisite to saddle a horse is not very long; two miles of road glide swiftly and smoothly back behind the long canter of a thorough-bred; the old lady at the lodge hobbled out to open the gate, and uttered a faint shriek, as I saved her the trouble by taking it in my stride; I daresay

she thought I was gone mad; and in less than twenty minutes from Doddy's astounding announcement I stood once more in the presence of Edith Waldgrave.

I placed in her hand Hawkins' letter, simply stating that it related to Ellen O'Reilly. I saw a sudden change in her countenance, there was a sweet confusion as she finished it, and, deliberately folding it up, returned it, and looked shyly into my eyes, and a sweeter expression still as I took her hand in mine.

Of what passed between her and me I shall say nothing. There is a time to speak and a time to abstain from speaking, a time to confess and a time to give over confessing, and the latter time, gentle reader, is at hand. Let it suffice to say,

that though Edith and I spent some very happy hours together that day, the first hurried explanation was short, sweet, and decisive.

Lady Elizabeth was somewhat startled with the sudden turn affairs had taken, but being very much pleased with the direction, supposed it was all for the best. Johnny was thunderstruck; the actual real presence of an engagement of marriage was rather more than he could at once swallow. His face at first assumed an expression that I have rarely seen upon the human countenance, but that any one curious in the matter may see represented to the life by offering a dog a glass of water. As the reality of the fact forced itself on his mind, he grew first grave, and then gradually

brightened up, till any one would have said that he was by far the happiest person in that house. Maria, as Doddy informed me afterwards, went into hysterics; and that young Leperello himself, upon my communicating to him the interesting circumstance that I was going to be married, asked with a coaxing leer, "Which of them, your honner?" Upon the answer being given, with a wild howl of "Gloria in excelsis," he flung a somerset, and lighting on his hands, commenced testifying his joy by walking round me just as he had done when I pronounced those ever blessed words, "jump on board." The effect, however, in his top boots and leathers, differed widely from what it was in his rags.

"Get on your legs, you young prodigal,"

said I; "would you ruin me in buckskin gloves, and me about to contract little responsibilities by the dozen?" to which he merely answered with a topsyturvy wink.

My lady mother received the announcement as well as could be expected. Certainly Miss Wallingford was much richer in money, but the house of Waldgrave was richer in blood, and, indeed, had been connected with royalty. My two sisters, Adeline and Gundreda, were delighted, and a long letter from Hawkins answered my announcement, in which he compared himself and me entering the holy state of matrimony at the same time to the Siamese twins, to Castor and Pollux, to twin cherries on one stalk, to Saul and Jonathan, and to bubble-and-squeak. The latter comparison

struck me as being made with more ingenuity than felicity, but I confidently trust that in exchanging the vagrancy of celibacy for the settlement of matrimony, we shall neither of us get out of the frying-pan into the fire.

O'Flaherty wrote me a long letter of condolence, in which, after enumerating the many bachelor enjoyments I was bidding adieu to, he summed up by the practical question, "And what, my dear boy, do you get in exchange for all these? tea and babbies, all your life long. I've a mind to go into mourning for you; but the Lord tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, so I'll take any cigars you have left off your hands. You'll find yourself lonesome without the other boys at first, like a lobster without his shell.

New married couples always do, till they have learned to get into one another's ways and out of one another's way, so if you take my advice, you'll combine society with economy, and well regulated housekeeping with convivial enjoyment, by keeping a table-d'hote for the first six months. I'll mention it at mess."

Ravenswood remarked, that there were those that built upon the sand, and those that built upon the rock, and that my house would stand. He gradually recovered his spirits; and how in due time he commenced again to lay the foundations of a house for his heart to dwell in, may perhaps be found hereafter.

Simpkins, under the burning skies of India, amidst the stern realities of warfare,

shook off the enervating influence of Country Quarters, and became a soldier and a man. He served with credit to himself and his country in the early campaigns against the Sikhs; and when, under the deadly cannonade of Sobraon, the regiment advanced with that unflinching gallantry and unwavering steadiness, before which the wild yet high-couraged hordes of the Punjaub melted away like snow before the sun, he, as well as poor Nugent, found a soldier's grave, on the battle-wasted banks of the Sutlej.

Jenkins, his sword hung up in the halls of Caradoc, from a woodland nest in the neighbourhood of Corwen, looks with a loving eye upon the valley of the Dee; his daily salad is animate with leeks unlimited, and his jokes are current from Oswestry to

Capelcurig, and are even sometimes met with in the neighbourhood of Bangor.

O'Flaherty commands the 120th in a rich Connaught brogue and gorgeous red nose. His unappeasable thirst elicited from Brigadier-general Twentyman, who commanded the brigade at Sobraon, the sarcastic remark, that Colonel O'Flaherty would swallow the Indus, provided there was brandy enough in it—a remark considered smart enough to be repeated at the table of the Commander-in-Chief, who observed, that “he would not lade his ridgment into hell's mouth the worse for that.”

Scattered over the surface of the earth, and many under it, is that light-hearted company that used to assemble round the colours of the 120th, and various have been

the careers of those with whom our wanderings brought us in contact. Mary Anne O'Malley married a quiet, respectable country clergyman. I never saw a confirmed flirt that did not. Ducrow married a popular actress—because Lord Huddlestone *admired* her; and I have no present knowledge of the fate of the rest of his brothers in arms.

Of the family of Mr. O'Reilly, of the vagaries of Doddy, of my boy Johnny, their courses and their fates, there may yet be something to be told—but not here. Three times, in a tranquil village church amid the rocks of Derbyshire, was a question put to a listening congregation, who all exchanged looks with one another when it was put; three times its only answer was

an assenting silence, and the day was not far off when a solemn voice at the altar, and a joyous peal in the air, told, in unmistakable accents, at least to one heart, that the confessional had closed upon the revelations of vagabondage, and, absolution once granted to the reclaimed penitent, the curtain had fallen upon the CONFESSIONS OF COUNTRY QUARTERS.

THE END.

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